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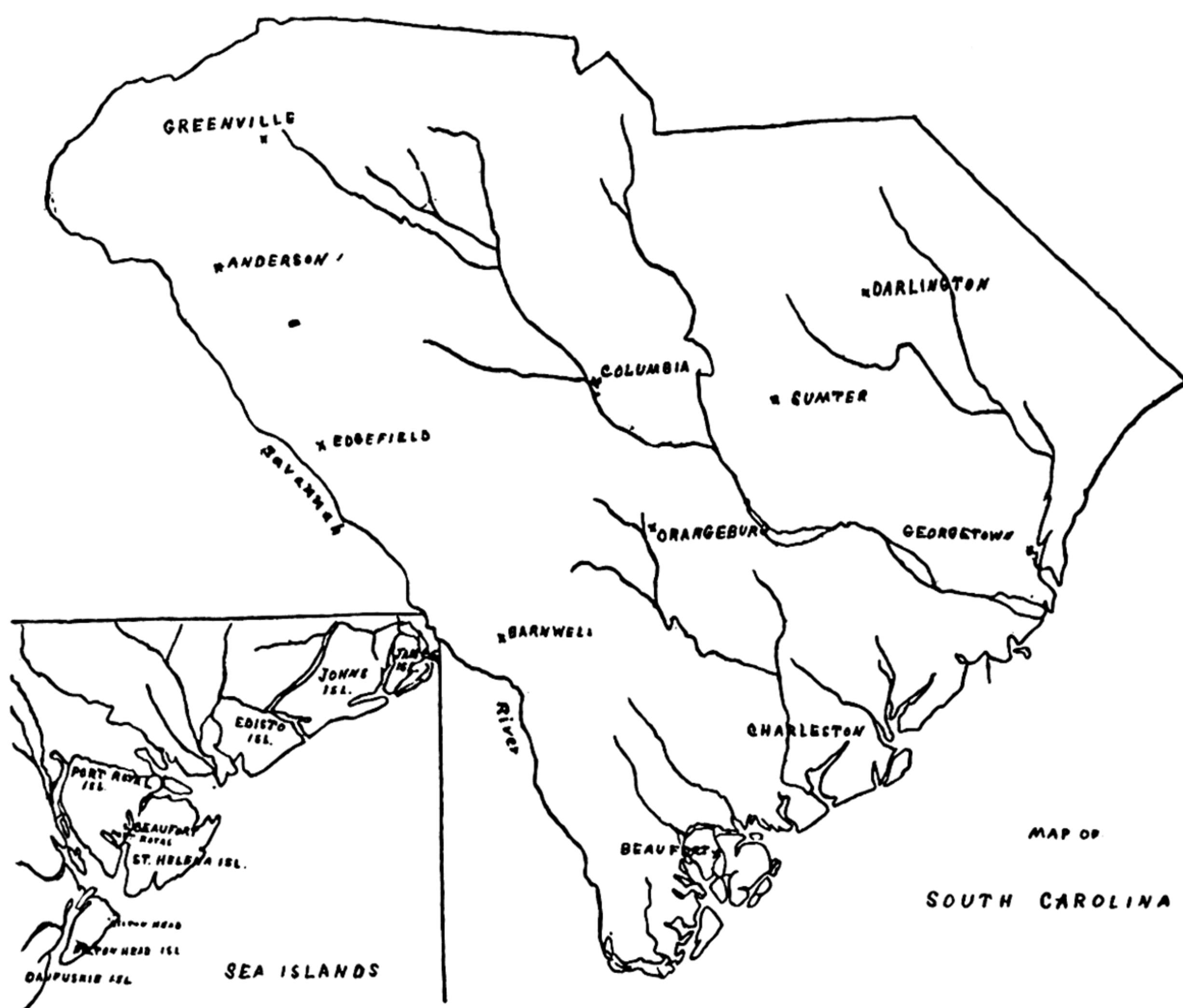
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THE OPERATION OF
THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU
IN SOUTH CAROLINA



Map of South Carolina, showing centres of the work
of the Freedmen's Bureau.

THE OPERATION OF
THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU
IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Laura Josephine Webster

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The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARIES

November 7, 1861, Commodore Dupont stormed and captured Fort Walker at Hilton Head, South Carolina. United States troops, under command of General W. T. Sherman, were immediately landed and took possession of Hilton Head, and soon afterward of Saint Helena and the entire island of Port Royal.¹ To escape falling into the hands of the enemy, the slave holders in the captured districts and adjacent islands fled to Charleston and the interior. They took with them the more intelligent of their slaves; the remainder, with the abandoned plantations, were left to the enemy. The region occupied by the Union forces consisted of some of the most valuable territory of the entire South, for only along the coast of South Carolina, Georgia and Texas can sea island cotton be produced. On these islands slavery had existed in its most absolute form, and the negroes there were of the lowest order of intelligence.²

Before leaving, the masters had warned the negroes to avoid the "Yankees," saying that if the latter had the opportunity, they would take them to Cuba to sell them again into slavery. Nevertheless, at Hilton Head a large portion of the negroes flocked to the piers to welcome the Union forces, who reported that they came ready for their journey, wherever it might be, each with his worldly possessions tied up in a little bundle.³ Much

¹ War of the Rebellion. Official Records, Series I., Vol. VI., pp. 186-193. Schouler, History of the United States, VI., 139; Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln, V., 14-20; Greeley, The American Conflict, I., 604-605.

² Reid, After the War, 94-95; Pierce, The Freedmen at Port Royal, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 301 (Sept., 1863).

³ Greeley, The American Conflict, I., 605. Schouler, History of the United States, VI., 139.

to their surprise the soldiers remained, and the negro population, gaining confidence as the days passed without evidence of coercion, began to rejoice in the absence of compulsory labor. They appropriated to their own use the potatoes and corn in the storehouses of their former masters and settled down to the enjoyment of their "year of Jubilee." It was in allusion to this period that the following poem was written by John Greenleaf Whittier:

"Ole Massa on he trabbels gone;
He leaf de land behind;
De Lord's breff blow him funder on
Like corn-shuck in de wind.
We own de hoe, we own de plough,
We own de hands dat hold;
We sell de pig, we sell de cow,
But nebber chile be sold.

"De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
We'll hab de rice an' corn:
O nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driver blow his horn!"⁴

The abandoned homes of the planters and of their overseers were soon filled with negro refugees who flocked to the Union lines in great numbers.⁵ It was reported on November 9 that 150 of them had come in two days.⁶ To these childlike people, freedom meant simply a perpetual cessation of labor, and General Sherman could not induce them to exert themselves sufficiently to carry on the work of the camp. He complained that the sudden change from servitude to apparent freedom was more than their intellects could stand.⁷ Their daily increasing numbers and decreasing resources caused him, on February 6, 1862, to appeal to "the benevolent and philanthropic of the land" to relieve the immediate wants of "this unfortunate and . . . interesting class of people." At that time he estimated that there were at least 9000 negroes within his lines.⁸ At the same time he applied

⁴ Whittier, "At Port Royal."

⁵ Pierce, *The Freedmen at Fort Royal*, *Atl. Mon.*, XII., 302. (Sept., 1863).

⁶ Official Records, Series I., Vol. VI., pp. 186-187.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

⁸ Gen. Sherman had first suggested this plan in a letter written Jan. 15, 1862. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

to headquarters for authority to put into operation a plan for the superintendence of agriculture and education within his department.⁹

Meanwhile Salmon P. Chase, secretary of the treasury, and a leading anti-slavery spirit had determined upon a plan of action similar to General Sherman's. Late in December, 1861, he sent Edward L. Pierce to visit the captured sea islands and to report to him upon the condition of the negroes there.¹⁰ Pierce was a young abolitionist of Boston, who had formerly studied in Chase's law office and who had superintended the labor of the "contrabands" at Fortress Monroe the preceding summer.¹¹

Pierce set out for South Carolina January 13, 1862. He completed a detailed report of the result of his observation on February 10,¹² and forwarded it to Secretary Chase. His conclusions, based upon a three weeks' examination of agricultural conditions and of the life and disposition of the negroes, he himself acknowledged as necessarily uncertain.¹³ However, his report shows careful investigation and a desire to conserve all the resources of the country in the interests of the national government.

Contrary to expectations, he found many of the negroes on the plantations indifferent to freedom and unwilling to fight for it. Some of them, recalling the prophecies of their masters that they would be taken to Cuba, had fled in alarm at the approach of the army. Others were determined to remain on the plantations and "take their chances" with the soldiers.¹⁴ No system of labor had as yet been established on the plantations. Agents, sent by the treasury department to superintend the "gathering, preparing and transporting to market of the cotton and other property" found by the army, had got the negroes to assist them,

⁹ Hart, Salmon P. Chase, 258.

¹⁰ Pierce, *Atl. Mon.*, XII., 296 (Sept. 1863).

¹¹ Wilson, *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, III., 457.

¹² The report was commenced on Feb. 3, 1862. Moore, *The Rebellion Record*, Companion Volume, 302.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 308-309.

but the service was performed in such a dilatory manner that Pierce assumed the defensive in speaking of it.¹⁵

At the military camps at Hilton Head and Beaufort, barracks had been erected for the negroes, and a regular system of labor had been devised. At Hilton Head, Barnard K. Lee, Jr., of Boston, had been in charge of the laborers since November, 1861. Definite arrangements had been made with the negroes to work for wages at rates regulated by General Sherman. Mechanics were to receive from eight to twelve dollars a month and other laborers from four to eight dollars. In addition, each laborer was given a ration of food for himself. Food and clothing for his family were furnished and the value was deducted from his wages. At the time of Pierce's report, 472 laborers were thus enrolled. Of these, 137 were on the pay roll, and the amount of money due them for labor during the first three months amounted to nearly \$1000. The failure to pay the promised wages, probably due to a lack of small currency, naturally tended to increase the negroes' native aversion to work.¹⁶ Although the customary means of enforcing discipline upon the blacks was not used by the superintendent of Hilton Head, Yankee ingenuity was not slow in finding a substitute for the lash and the whipping post. Pierce reports that "the delinquent, if a male, is sometimes made to stand on a barrel, or, if a woman, is put in a dark room;" and he added that such discipline proved successful.¹⁷

At Beaufort, William Harding, a citizen of Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, had recently been appointed superintendent, but because of the delay in his appointment, little had as yet been accomplished. The Reverend Solomon Peck of Roxbury, Massachusetts, had established a school there, January 8, 1862, and was maintaining it largely at his own expense. The school then contained 60 pupils.¹⁸

As a result of his observations, Pierce recommended to Secre-

¹⁵ House Ex. Docs., 37 Cong., 3 Sess., Vol. VII., No. 72, p. 1. Moore, Companion Volume, 307.

¹⁶ Moore, Companion Volume, 313.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 313.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 314. Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 11.

tary Chase the following plan for the cultivation of the 195 plantations then in control of the army in South Carolina. Superintendents of plantations should be appointed and "given adequate power to enforce a paternal discipline, to require a proper amount of labor, cleanliness, sobriety and better habits of life, and generally to promote the moral and intellectual culture of their wards."¹⁹ For each large plantation there should be a superintendent, while several small ones could be placed under the control of one man. A director-general should inspect the work of all the plantations, and a uniform system of wages was to be determined. The government should provide teachers for the elementary branches of education, and missionaries should be encouraged. This plan, Pierce thought, would render the negro self-supporting, and would train him for citizenship. He pointed out to Secretary Chase that haste was necessary, as destitution was imminent without the assistance of the government. When he wrote, the time for planting had already arrived.²⁰

Upon the completion of his report, Pierce went to Washington. There he interviewed Secretary Chase, President Lincoln and several congressmen in behalf of his plans for the negroes on the sea islands. His report was approved by Secretary Chase, but even his personal friends in congress refused to act in the matter, and President Lincoln, then deeply concerned over the condition of his son, seemed impatient at being troubled with "such details." However, on February 19, 1862, Pierce was appointed by Secretary Chase as special agent of the treasury department to superintend "the culture of plantations and the employment of the laborers thereon."²¹ Since an appropriation could not be obtained from congress, a plan of coöperation was arranged with the benevolent societies of the North, whereby superintendents of plantations and teachers were to be paid by

¹⁹ It is interesting to notice the similarity of this plan to the paternal oversight previously exercised over the negroes by their masters.

²⁰ Moore, Companion Volume, 311, 312.

²¹ Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 296-297 (Sept., 1863); Hart, Salmon P. Chase, 259; House Ex. Docs., 37 Cong., 3 Sess., Vol. VII., No. 72 p. 2.

them, while subsistence, transportation and quarters would be furnished by the government.²²

A word must be said about the philanthropic societies without whose help the work inaugurated by Pierce would have been impossible. While still at Port Royal, he had appealed for help to friends in Boston, which resulted in the organization there, on February 7, of The Educational Commission. The Freedmen's Relief Association was organized in New York February 20, and Philadelphia followed, March 3, with The Port Royal Relief Committee. Soon afterwards numerous similar societies sprang up throughout the North and West, and even in Great Britain.²³ These societies at first provided the funds for the employment of both superintendents and teachers, but after July 1, 1862, the government undertook the payment of superintendents from the sale of confiscated cotton. Besides contributions of money, the societies furnished quantities of provisions of all kinds.²⁴

March 3, 1862, Pierce embarked from New York with a company of 41 men and 12 women, among whom he said "were some of the choicest young men of New England, fresh from Harvard, Yale and Brown, and from the divinity schools of Andover and Cambridge. . . There were some of whom the world was scarce worthy, and to whom . . . I delight to pay the tribute of my respect and admiration."²⁵ John Murray Forbes, who happened to be travelling on the same vessel, gives in a letter written March 4, the following description of his fellow voyagers: "Our passengers consist chiefly of the 'villaintropic' society . . .; bearded and mustached and odd-looking men,

²² Moore, *Companion Volume*, 315. The government advances were made by the war department. House Ex. Docs., 37 Cong., 3 Sess., Vol. VII., No. 72, p. 2. Official Records, Ser. I., Vol. VI., p. 227.

²³ The aggregate contribution from Great Britain amounted to \$800,000. Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 196; Wilson, *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, III., 468.

²⁴ Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 297 (Sept., 1863); Wilson, *Slave Power*, III., 464-471.

²⁵ Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 4; Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 298, 299 (Sept., 1863).

with odder looking women.”²⁶ This company reached Beaufort March 9, 1862, and the members were soon assigned by the special agent to their different fields of labor as teachers, nurses and superintendents. “During the first year they furnished 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, \$3,000 worth of farming implements and seeds, and had about 3,000 scholars under instruction.”²⁷ The superintendent found that the negroes remaining on the plantations had in most instances planted patches of corn and potatoes. With difficulty they were prevailed upon to resume the cultivation of cotton, on the promise of payment for the care of this crop which heretofore had caused them the hardest labor, and from which they had received no benefit.²⁸

Many difficulties impeded the work of the special agent. The lateness of the season when the superintendents arrived, the negroes' lack of confidence in the promise of wages,²⁹ and the scarcity of agricultural equipment³⁰ all seriously handicapped the enterprise. But by far the greatest hindrance was the feeling of opposition on the part of the government employees already in the field. From November until March the soldiers and cotton agents had enjoyed sole possession of the conquered territory. When a company of missionaries appeared, authorized by the government to claim all abandoned property, the newcomers were regarded by many as interlopers, and received the derisive term

²⁶ Hughes, *Life and Recollections of Jno. Murray Forbes*, I., 295, 296.

²⁷ Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, pp. 4, 5.

²⁸ Moore, *Companion Volume*, 315-328. Upon the flight of the planters, the slaves' hatred of the cotton industry showed itself in a savage destruction of cotton gins. Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 308 (Sept., 1863).

²⁹ This feeling was justifiable, since the cotton agents had not yet kept their promise of paying the negroes for baling and transporting the cotton. Moore, *Companion Volume*, 320.

³⁰ Until after the middle of April, the plowing had been done largely by hand, since the planters in their flight had taken with them nearly all of the mules. The middle of April, ninety mules, sent from New York by the government, reached Beaufort, and were distributed among the plantations. Tools and farming implements were also sent from the North. Moore, *Companion Volume*, 319.

of "Gideonites."³¹ This feeling is well expressed in a letter written in April by John Murray Forbes to Charles Sumner, in which he said: "The undercurrent against the commission here is very strong, even among those who ought to know better. First the cotton agents think their interests, and their personal use of negroes, horses and houses hurt thereby; then the settlers and finally the military, are all prejudiced, especially the subordinates; the lower you go the worse the feeling, the generals and those high up doing, I believe, all they can, and showing, so far as I can judge, a good spirit."³²

This hostility manifested itself in petty annoyances, in personal violences, and in a general lack of harmony between the departments. An example of the failure to coöperate with the military authorities is worthy of notice. On May 12, 1862, the superintendents, much against their will, aided in carrying out an order of General Hunter's requiring that all able-bodied negroes between the ages of eighteen and forty-five should be sent to Hilton Head to be armed.³³ This was done amid the protests of the conscripts and the loud lamentations of their families, and to the detriment of crops then under cultivation. These crops, deprived of 600 "full hands," were left dependent upon the work of women, children and old men.

Since this lack of harmony existed it is probably well that on June 28, 1862, the control of plantations was transferred from the treasury to the war department.³⁴ Brigadier General Rufus Saxton was assigned by the secretary of war to duty in the department of the south with directions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.³⁵ General Saxton was a native of Massachusetts and represented the feeling of that state in regard to

³¹ Pierce claimed for the title Gideonites "just rank with the honored titles of Puritan and Methodist." *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 298 (Sept., 1863).

³² Hughes, *Life and Recollections of John Murray Forbes*, I., pp. 300, 301.

³³ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. II., No. 123, pp. 52 *et seq.*

³⁴ Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 178.

³⁵ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. II., Serial 123, pp. 27, 152, 153.

negro privileges. His appointment was made at the personal request of Secretary Chase.³⁶

Although the captured plantations were now under different management, Pierce's plans were largely followed, with a few changes as to general supervision. Port Royal and adjacent islands were arranged in three divisions, and a general superintendent appointed over each, with subordinate local superintendents in charge of the plantations.³⁷ A plan, begun by Pierce, was carried out, whereby two acres of land were assigned to each working hand, with five-sixteenths of an acre additional for each child. On this the negroes were to raise corn and potatoes sufficient for their own subsistence. In payment for the use of the land and of the cattle necessary for its cultivation, they were to work the government's cotton fields and to cultivate additional food supplies for the plowmen, the superintendents and the disabled ones of the plantations. In case any persons refused to work in the cotton fields, they were charged rent at the rate of two dollars a month for the houses and lands used.³⁸ Rations were furnished where necessary, but Nordhoff asserts that none were supplied to those who were destitute by their own fault.³⁹

The system of wages used on the plantations is not clear, but it seems to have been as follows: At first Pierce assigned to each laborer in the cotton fields one dollar an acre as an advance on his wage account.⁴⁰ In March, 1863, Nordhoff wrote that twenty-five cents was paid for each day's work in the cotton fields, the nature and extent of the work being strictly defined. He reported that the negroes were paid in addition two and a half cents a pound for the cotton each raised and picked.⁴¹ It will be

³⁶ Hart, Salmon P. Chase, 259.

³⁷ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., Serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

³⁸ Nordhoff, *The Freedmen of S. C.*, 13-15; Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 178; Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 308 (Sept., 1863).

³⁹ Nordhoff, *The Freedmen of S. C.*, 14.

⁴⁰ Moore, *Companion Volume*, 320.

⁴¹ Nordhoff, *The Freedmen of S. C.*, 14. Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 308 (Sept., 1863). According to Pierce, a standard day's work could, by beginning early, be performed by a healthy and active hand by noon.

remembered that work on the government's cotton fields was accepted in payment of rent for the negroes' houses and patches on which they raised their own food supply. Thus provision was made, not only for the negroes to become independent of the government rations, but that they should have a certain amount of spending money. Stores were established for the use of the blacks at various places on the islands, and one of the most encouraging signs of negro advancement was their growing demand for the accessories of civilization.⁴²

In August, 1862, an event occurred which caused great loss to the work on the plantations. Ordering the cavalry from the department of the south to aid McClellan necessitated the abandonment of James, Edisto and Daufuskie Islands, where were 2,000 acres of growing corn, potatoes and cotton. Fifteen hundred people were removed from these islands to Saint Helena Island, where, according to Saxton's report, there were neither proper accommodations nor adequate employment for them. To add to his embarrassment, 600 people from Georgetown and 175 from Hutchison's Island were also sent to Saint Helena.⁴³ The withdrawal of troops and consequent overcrowding of the negroes resulted in the formation of the first colored regiment of the United States Army.⁴⁴ Feeling the need of protection, Saxton applied to Secretary Stanton for permission to organize, from the "contrabands" in his department, a force not exceeding 5,000 able-bodied men. His request was granted with the understanding that the troops were to be used to guard the plantations and to make incursions into the hostile territory for the purpose of bringing away negroes and thus diminishing the strength of the enemy.⁴⁵ The regiment organized by General Saxton, known as the First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers, was mustered

⁴² Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., pp. 310-311 (Sept., 1863); Nordhoff, *The Freedmen of S. C.*, 20.

⁴³ Official Records, Ser. I., Vol. XIV., p. 375.

⁴⁴ The colored troops conscripted by General Hunter, May, 1862, were never paid, and were disbanded August 11, 1862. Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 312 (Sept., 1863); Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. II., No. 123, p. 695.

⁴⁵ Official Records, Ser. I., Vol. XIV., pp. 374-378.

into the service of the United States in October, 1862, and was placed under the command of Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson.⁴⁶

Instead of the 5,000 volunteers for which Saxton had asked, the new regiment numbered only about 860 men.⁴⁷ The unwillingness of most of the negroes to serve in the army was noticed by Pierce on his first visit to the islands in the winter of 1862. He found this especially true of negroes on the plantations, where initiative and self-reliance had been largely suppressed. "Black men have been kept down so like dogs, that they would run before white men," the negroes told him. Nevertheless, he reported a few cases of their brave resistance.⁴⁸ Throughout the war, 5,462 negro troops were furnished by South Carolina. Though at first their enlistment was regarded by many as a worthless experiment, on the whole they proved satisfactory soldiers. With the abandonment of 2,000 acres of cultivated land and the withdrawal of many of the best laborers to serve in the army, it is not surprising that the agricultural output for the first year was disappointing. The cotton crop amounted to 50,000 pounds of ginned sea island cotton (about 500 bales), then worth in the Market \$50,000. Food had been raised for the negroes and a supply of corn and fodder had been furnished the army.⁴⁹

General Saxton was very desirous that the freedmen⁵⁰ should own land. Provision had been made by acts of Congress for sale, to the highest bidder, of land forfeited to the United States for non-payment of direct taxes.⁵¹ This tax had been levied on all the States, but the levy had been disregarded by those in the Southern Confederacy. In consequence, when any of the terri-

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Ser. III., Vol. IV., No. 125, p. 1027.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Ser. III., Vol. III., No. 124, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Moore, Companion Volume, 308; William, Geo. W., History of the Negro Race in America, II., 300.

⁴⁹ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., No. 125, p. 1024; Nordhoff, The Freedmen of S. C., 14; Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 299 (Sept., 1863).

⁵⁰ All slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the U. S. forces, or escaping thereto, were declared free by act of congress, July 17, 1862. Statutes at Large, XII., 591.

⁵¹ Statutes at Large, XII., 422-426, 589-592, 640, 641 (Acts of June 7, 1862, July 17, 1862 and Feb. 6, 1863).

tory of the Southern States fell into the hands of the Union, all proceeds from the sale of such land were kept as partial compensation for the debt of the entire state. In March, 1863, about one-fourth of the abandoned plantations in South Carolina were sold at auction. Of the 47 plantations sold, 6 were purchased by negroes, the remainder by Northerners who cultivated them with hired negro labor.⁵²

September, 1863, President Lincoln issued orders for the sale to the highest bidder of all the unreserved lands. A small portion was set apart to be offered to negro families at private sale for \$1.25 per acre. According to Saxton's report, this arrangement could provide for less than one-half of the negroes, with allotments of two acres each.⁵³ A better provision was intended in an order issued by the president to the direct tax commissioners, December 30, 1863, so worded as to give the negroes preëmption rights to "any lands in the district of South Carolina owned by the United States." To one person was to be allowed one, or at the option of the preëmtor, two tracts of twenty acres each, for which he should pay \$1.25 an acre. Two-fifths of the price was to be paid on receipt of the certificate of preëmption, the remainder on receipt of the deed.⁵⁴ Saxton at once communicated these instructions to the negroes, who joyfully staked out allotments for nearly all the land in the district and applied to the commissioners for the certificates of preëmption. Although the negroes tendered the payment required by the president's order, the majority of the tax commissioners declared the order illegal, and refused to receive the money. The instructions were soon afterward suspended by the secretary of the treasury, and the lands sold to other purchasers.⁵⁵ Thus ended the first attempt of the negroes to own the abandoned and confiscated land of South Carolina.

Although a large part of the land had been sold in March,

⁵² Annual Cyclopaedia, 1863, p. 430; Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 308-310 (Sept., 1863).

⁵³ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., No. 125, p. 1025.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1026.

1863, Saxton was able to report for that year that 470,000 pounds of seed cotton had been raised on the plantations still retained by the government. When ginned, this would leave about 150,000 pounds, three times the amount produced in 1862. Saxton stated that the cotton crop of the year would considerably more than meet all of his expenses. In addition, the negroes had raised food enough for their own needs. Rations, however, had been supplied to the destitute refugees who had come into the Union lines since the planting season.⁵⁶

The following year, 1864, Saxton's powers were very much limited. The land was sold, or else passed into the hands of the direct tax commissioners, so that the supervision of plantations ceased. He still maintained authority over "regulations for the sanitary condition and police of the department, and for the protection of the freedmen in their industry and its products. To secure justice between the negroes and their employers, he instituted a system of written contracts, obligatory upon all who employed the freedmen in agriculture. These contracts were signed by both parties, witnessed by his superintendents and subject to his approval. He also established for the freedmen, August 27, 1864, the South Carolina Savings Bank at Beaufort, where by the close of the year \$65,000 had been deposited. By refusing to allow the negroes to sell their cotton until they had obtained a certificate from the superintendent, saying that the sale had been fairly made, he protected them from unscrupulous purchasers. He also ordered that no cotton should be shipped from the department until he was satisfied that the negroes had received their just share for labor expended thereon.⁵⁷

Except for Pierce's report of February 3, 1862, in regard to the regulation of negro labor and education at Beaufort and Hilton Head,⁵⁸ we have so far confined our discussion to the condition of the negroes on the plantations.⁵⁹ Pierce's authority

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 119.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1022-1023.

⁵⁸ See pages 4, 5 above.

⁵⁹ The organization of negro troops was closely allied to the subject, as it was to protect the plantations that they were enlisted.

was over the plantation negroes only, and until the transfer of supervision to the war department, July 1, 1862, regulations for the negroes at the army posts were made by the quartermaster's department.⁶⁰ After the transfer, the same department seems to have continued its supervision over the negroes at the army posts, with a general oversight exercised by Saxton.⁶¹ Nordhoff wrote in 1863 that the negroes had done almost all the work in the quartermaster's department⁶² and in December, 1864, Saxton reported that numbers of the negroes were engaged as "mechanics, employees in the quartermaster's department, house and officers' servants, and in various handicrafts."⁶³

At Hilton Head an interesting experiment was tried by the military authorities. Half an hour's ride from the camp, lands were set aside for a negro village, known as Mitchelville in honor of General Ormsby M. Mitchel. Its population was made up entirely of negroes with a well organized town government in which all the officers were negroes, and all, except the mayor and treasurer, were elected by them. It is interesting to note that the common council of the village required all children between the ages of six and fifteen to attend school regularly, "except in cases where their services are absolutely necessary for the support of their parents, of which the teacher is made the judge."⁶⁴ Thus, in the negro village of Mitchelville, was established the first compulsory education law in South Carolina.

During the three and a half years of military occupancy, earnest efforts were being made to provide educational advantages for all the negro children on the sea islands. It will be remembered that the philanthropic societies had undertaken to provide and support teachers, while transportation, quarters and subsistence were to be furnished by the government.⁶⁵ Before

⁶⁰ House Ex. Docs., 37 Cong., 3 Sess., Vol. VII., No. 72, p. 2; Moore, Companion Volume, 316.

⁶¹ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., No. 125, p. 1024.

⁶² Nordhoff, 3.

⁶³ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., No. 125, p. 1024.

⁶⁴ Reid, Whitelaw, After the War, 89-90; Fleming, Doc. Hist. of Reconstruction, I., 73-75.

⁶⁵ See pp. 71-73 above.

the arrival of Pierce's first delegation, March 9, 1862, schools had been established at Beaufort and Hilton Head.⁶⁶ Most of the women and a few of the men of this delegation were assigned as teachers to various parts of the islands, but until the following autumn not more than a dozen schools had been established. This was due largely to the intense summer heat and to the scarcity of teachers. Some teachers, who had come in the first delegation, returned home during the summer, thus causing schools only just established to be abandoned.⁶⁷ The position of teacher in negro schools was not desirable, except to one imbued with missionary zeal. To small salaries and personal discomforts were added absence of all social enjoyments and the ill-concealed contempt of the army. Some of the teachers who responded to the call of the missionary societies represented the highest culture of the North.⁶⁸

In the fall of 1862 educational plans on the islands were revised, and about 3,000 scholars were reported under instruction during that year.⁶⁹ In 1863 Pierce, who was on the islands from March 25 to May 10, stated that there were more than 30 schools in the territory, conducted by 40 or 45 teachers. He found the more advanced pupils studying the second reader, elementary arithmetic and geography. It is interesting to note that the germ of the present industrial education of the negro existed in Beaufort, where a New York woman was teaching sewing to 113 colored girls. The negroes showed an earnest desire for education and were often willing to make sacrifices for its acquisition. Sometimes the older negroes came for instruction after school hours and studied in the intervals of labor.⁷⁰ Negro soldiers had their own schools, superintended by the officers,⁷¹ and when Northerners bought land, they often established schools on the

⁶⁶ Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 303 (Sept., 1863).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 303-307; Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., No. 125, p. 1027.

⁶⁹ Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 5.

⁷⁰ Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., pp. 303-308 (Sept., 1863); *The Nation*, Vol. I., 746 (Dec. 14, 1865).

⁷¹ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., pp. 249, 250.

plantations at their own expense. Mr. C. F. P. Bancroft, proprietor of 13 plantations, established five free schools, which were attended by 300 pupils.⁷² During the latter part of the period under consideration, the United States tax commissioners supervised several schools maintained by them from the proceeds of rent obtained from forfeited lands.⁷³

The real work of these negro schools can not be estimated by the proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic attained by the pupils. The lessons they learned in cleanliness, industry and patriotism were of much greater value to this newly emancipated race. The thought of negro children, eagerly grasping the rudiments of knowledge, before withheld from them, appealed strongly to the sentiment of the North and called forth from Whittier the following song written for the schools of Saint Helena Island:

“The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen’s Isle!

“For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,—
We’re free on Carolina’s shore,
We’re all at home and free!”⁷⁴

On General Sherman’s famous march to the sea, thousands of negroes followed his army. At Savannah he was confronted with the problem of what to do with this host of illiterate people, dependent upon him for support. He sent a thousand of them to Saxton at Beaufort,⁷⁵ but disposing of them even in this wholesale manner far from settled the problem.

Finally, as a result of a conference with Secretary Stanton, he issued, on January 16, 1865, his celebrated special field order number 15. It reserved for the settlement of the negroes the islands from Charleston south and the abandoned rice fields for

⁷² Annual Cyclopaedia, 1863, p. 430; Howard, Autobiography, II., 192; *The Nation*, I., 747 (Dec. 14, 1865).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 227 (Aug. 24, 1865).

⁷⁴ Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, XII., 304 (Sept., 1863).

⁷⁵ *Harper’s Weekly*, IX., 50 (Jan. 28, 1865).

30 miles inland. At Beaufort and Hilton Head the blacks were to be allowed to remain in their chosen or accustomed occupations, but on the islands no white person, except military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, could reside. It provided for allotments of not more than 40 acres of land to negro families, in the possession of which they were to be protected by the military authorities until such time as they could protect themselves, or until Congress should "regulate their titles." Saxton was appointed inspector of settlements and plantations, with authority to furnish to each head of a family a possessory title to his apportionment of land. The order definitely stated that no change was intended or desired in the settlement then on Beaufort Island, and that rights to property before acquired should not be affected.⁷⁶ Acting under this order, Saxton settled not only the negroes already in his district but hundreds who were lured there by the fame of this freedmen's paradise.

At a time when many opposing theories were held in regard to the rights of the negro and his possibilities of development, the three years' experiment on the sea islands of South Carolina was of great importance. The results did not reach the expectations of the extreme champions of the negro. They had believed and taught that all that was needed was to release him from servitude and oppression and he would quickly prove himself the equal of the white man. To such theorists, the reports from the sea islands, though unduly exalting the negro, revealed the fact that even in freedom and as the ward of the nation, the characteristics of servility, indolence and improvidence persisted. For the Southerners also, the experiment had its lesson. Many had believed the negro incapable of advancement and useless as a free laborer. On the sea islands it had been proved that he would work without compulsion. Many negroes had become entirely self-supporting, and negro labor, for which reasonable wages had been paid, had brought money into the United States treasury and into the hands of individual planters. Moreover, some of

⁷⁶ Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. 47, Part II., pp. 60, 61. In condensing this order, omission has been made of any land outside of S. C.

the race had shown their efficiency as soldiers. A real beginning had been made in the education of the negro and it was evident that he was eager to attend school and could learn the elementary studies.

March 3, 1865, when the first freedmen's bureau bill became a law, the experiment on the sea islands of South Carolina was extended to all the "insurrectionary states." How the work which we have reviewed was reorganized, enlarged, and made operative in all the districts of South Carolina will be the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

LEGISLATION AND ORGANIZATION

The bill for establishing in the war department a bureau of refugees, freedmen and abandoned lands was signed by President Lincoln March 3, 1865. To this bureau was committed "the supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen." The president was authorized to appoint a commissioner to whom should be given the general management of the bureau, and also ten assistant commissioners for the states "declared to be in insurrection." Annual salaries were to be paid to the commissioner and his ten assistants, but any military officer might be detailed and assigned to duty without increase of pay or allowance. Provisions, clothing and fuel might be issued by direction of the secretary of war "for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen." The commissioner was authorized "to set apart, for the use of loyal refugees and freedmen, such tracts of land within the insurrectionary states as shall have been abandoned, or to which the United States shall have acquired title by confiscation, or sale, or otherwise." Provision was made for the allotment of this land in 40-acre tracts to the negroes. The bureau was to continue "during the present war of rebellion, and for one year thereafter."¹

President Lincoln chose as commissioner of the freedmen's bureau Major General Oliver Otis Howard, who had served with distinction during the war, and was then in command of the army of the Tennessee. Unwilling to withdraw General Howard from the field where he was still needed, Lincoln delayed the appointment, which was finally made by President Johnson on May 12, 1865.² Howard at once entered upon the discharge of his duties and made the following four divisions of bureau work: lands,

¹ Statutes at Large, XIII., 507-509.

² Howard, Autobiography, II., 206-209.

records (embracing labor, schools and quartermaster's and commissary supplies), finances, and medical aid.³

June 13, Howard announced the appointment of Brevet Major General Rufus Saxton as assistant commissioner for the states of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, with headquarters at Beaufort. To most of the assistant commissioners only one state was assigned, but an extra share fell to Saxton because of "his long experience with the freedmen."⁴ Soon after his appointment, a severe illness necessitated Saxton's absence for 30 days, thus delaying the organization of the bureau in his districts. To lighten his work, Howard appointed assistant commissioners over Georgia and Florida, so that by the last of September Saxton's direct supervision was over South Carolina alone.⁵ His appointment enabled him to carry on the work in which he had been engaged for the past three years, and gave continuity to the direction of negro affairs in South Carolina.

By December, 1865, the state was divided into the following districts: Anderson, Beaufort, Charleston, Columbia, Georgetown, and Orangeburg. Over each was placed an officer known as a sub-assistant commissioner.⁶ As far as possible, the districts were divided into sub-districts, and the army officers detailed from duty to serve in these divisions were known as acting sub-assistant commissioners, which cumbersome title was usually shortened to "A. S. A. Commissioners." All civilians in the service of the bureau were known as agents.⁷ A system was inaugurated by which each official of the bureau reported to his immediate superior.⁸ Saxton was in the habit of making month-

³ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 2.

⁴ Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 215; Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 47; Saxton assumed control and issued his first circular three days before Howard's formal announcement of his appointment. Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 230.

⁵ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 2, 3, 27. Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 217.

⁶ Senate Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 27, pp. 21-23; Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 37.

⁷ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 107; these terms were not strictly adhered to, and were often interchanged.

⁸ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 116.

ly abstracts of outrages compiled from the reports sent him by his sub-assistant commissioners,⁹ and by the terms of the freedmen's bureau bill he was required to report every three months to General Howard.¹⁰ The extension of the bureau to the interior was hindered in two ways. Hostility on the part of some of the whites made it dangerous for officers to go to the remote parts of the state, unless protected by military authority. General Ely, the sub-assistant commissioner for Columbia, in his frequent trips to the various parts of his large district, was accompanied by an armed orderly. This method was very generally used.¹¹

The second serious hindrance to the extension of the work was the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of bureau officials. The omission of Congress to make an appropriation for the bureau largely limited the choice of officials. A few civilians were found who freely gave their services, but the work was largely dependent upon army officers, who, by the terms of the freedmen's bureau bill, could be detailed and assigned to duty without increase of salary. Because of the mustering out of the volunteers, the bureau was unable to obtain even from the army all the officers necessary.¹² Consequently the district assigned to one man was too large to receive careful attention to details. Of the six bureau districts, only Columbia and Anderson were north of the central part of the state. This left a larger area to be supervised by the two up-state sub-assistant commissioners than was controlled by four officials in the south where the country was more thoroughly guarded by the army. A special correspondent of *The Nation* wrote from South Carolina, November 27, 1865: "Doubtless an officer of the greatest ability and activity, with the best intentions, would find

⁹ Report of Joint Com. on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 218.

¹⁰ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 47. Statutes at Large, XIII., 508.

¹¹ *The Nation*, II., 46 (Jan. 11, 1866); Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 3; Schurz, Report, 40.

¹² Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 3.

it almost impossible, with the means now in his control, to protect all the negroes in one of these wide-extending districts."¹³

Another evil arose from the fact that officers for the bureau were detailed to service by the military commander, usually without consultation with the district commissioner. Under this system, which took from the managers of the bureau the choice of their assistants, it is not surprising that a large number of the officials were unfit for their positions.¹⁴ Matters were made worse by the frequent shifting of the army, so that officials were sometimes in control no more than a few days before a change was made. Sidney Andrews wrote in September, 1865, in regard to the bureau officials in South Carolina: "The probabilities are that half the aggregate number on duty at any given time are wholly unfit for the work intrusted to them."¹⁵ Of the official at Orangeburg, in whose office he had spent some time, he wrote: "His position . . . is a difficult one, and he brings to it a head more or less muddled with liquor, a rough and coarse manner, a dictatorial and impatient temper, a most remarkable ability for cursing, and a hearty contempt for 'the whole d—n pack o' niggers.'"¹⁶ Sometimes army officers were required to attend to the work of the bureau besides keeping up their military duties. This increase of labor without added compensation naturally tended to make them dislike the bureau.¹⁷

During the first year of the bureau's existence, there were in South Carolina four sources of authority: the customary United States officials, the provisional state government under the auspices of President Johnson, the United States military forces, and the freedmen's bureau. Such a condition would naturally lead to complications, even though the relations between the officers of the different departments were always harmonious. But harmony did not exist in South Carolina. In Howard's first

¹³ *The Nation*, I., 780 (Dec. 21, 1865).

¹⁴ Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 23, 24; Trowbridge, *A Picture of the Desolated States*, 338; *The Nation*, I., 779 (Dec. 21, 1865).

¹⁵ Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 24.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 3; *The Nation*, I., 779 (Dec. 21, 1865).

annual report, December 15, 1865, he wrote: "The department commander had his headquarters at Hilton Head; General Saxton his at Beaufort, and finally at Charleston, and the provisional governor was in the northern part of the state. Hence there has been much separate and some conflicting action on the part of these officers, and many misunderstandings. I believe, now that the department commander and assistant commissioner are both at Charleston, and co-operating, more complete order and confidence will be the result."¹⁸

Through Howard's recommendation a change was effected whereby the assistant commissioner of South Carolina assumed command of the military forces of the state in June, 1866. The bureau districts were also made to correspond more nearly to the military divisions.¹⁹ This arrangement, though an improvement on the former system, did not obviate all friction, but transferred it to a different quarter. In November, 1866, the assistant commissioner for South Carolina complained that his command of the military was only nominal, and that General Sickles, the department commander for both North and South Carolina, had reserved most of the rights to himself.²⁰ An order of General Sickles that district commanders must report to him on matters concerning freedmen, as well as on military affairs, was appealed to General Grant, who overruled it.²¹

This example of friction between the civil, military, and bureau departments is described in *The Nation* of July 19, 1866: "General Scott, assistant commissioner for South Carolina, recently prepared careful estimates of the rations needed to sustain the destitute of that state, and forwarded them to the proper authorities. General Sickles, however, his military superior, disapproved of them on the ground that Governor Orr discredited the reports on which they were based, and the rations were accordingly withheld. A correspondence upon the subject between

¹⁸ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 26.

¹⁹ Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 284; Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 116; *Charleston Daily Courier*, May 25, 1866.

²⁰ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 116.

²¹ *The Nation*, III., 43 (July 19, 1866).

General Howard and Governor Orr revealed a misapprehension on the part of General Sickles, the governor being solicitous that the rations should be furnished as proposed."²²

The trouble between those high in command simply reflected the feeling of their subordinates. The assistant commissioner reported: "Many of the officers in command of troops manifest an aversion to the bureau and do not seem disposed to carry out its provisions, and I regret to say that the freed people in many localities fear the troops as much as they do their former master." Complaints of difficulties with post commanders over judicial affairs were sent to the assistant commissioner from all over the state.²³

January 15, 1866, Saxton was succeeded as assistant commissioner of South Carolina by General Robert K. Scott of Ohio. The reasons for the change are nowhere openly avowed. Saxton testified that he thought his removal due to "misrepresentation of such men as ex-Governor Aiken and William Whaley," to whom he had refused to surrender the land formerly owned by them.²⁴ Light is thrown on the subject by Howard in his "Autobiography," in which he complains that President Johnson was "very anxious to be rid of every prominent officer who was reported to have been the freedmen's friend," and that in the president's eyes Saxton was too much the advocate of his wards.²⁵ Generals Steedman and Fullerton, who were sent by President Johnson in the spring of 1866 to investigate the operation of the freedmen's bureau, condemned the results of Saxton's administration. They reported that a too liberal issue of supplies on his part had fostered idleness and improvidence among the negroes, and they criticised in particular his policy on the sea islands. Too much weight, however, should not be given

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 116, 119.

²⁴ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 216; Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 736.

²⁵ Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 283-284.

this report, which is evidently biased in favor of Scott as opposed to Saxton.²⁶

That Saxton was beloved by his charges and that he had their interests at heart can not be doubted.²⁷ But in the turbulent period of reconstruction, something more was needed in the official who served as chief arbiter between the whites and blacks in South Carolina. Whitelaw Reid described him in 1865 as "narrow, but intense, not very profound in seeing the right, but energetic in doing it when seen; given to practice rather than theory; and withal, good and true."²⁸ Such a man might unwittingly hinder rather than help the cause he advocated. Scott, who succeeded Saxton, was by no means his equal in culture or character, but in many particulars he made a more efficient assistant commissioner. He was more conciliatory toward the white people of the state and less ardent in his advocacy of negro rights.²⁹

July 16, 1866, the powers of the freedmen's bureau were enlarged by the passage, over President Johnson's veto, of the third freedmen's bureau bill.³⁰ Provision was made for the following changes. The bureau was to continue in existence for two years after the passage of the act. The commissioner was authorized to appoint such agents, clerks and assistants as were necessary, detailed from the army without increase of pay, or chosen from the ranks of civilians. In the latter case they should receive an annual salary of from \$500 to \$1,200. The bureau

²⁶ Charleston *Daily Courier*, June 16, 1866.

²⁷ *The Nation*, II., 754 (June 15, 1866).

I am indebted to Dr. Samuel A. Green for the information that General Saxton's name was softened by the negroes to *Saxaby*. Whitelaw Reid preserves the following spirituel, in which the negroes showed their esteem of General Saxton by associating him with their idea of heaven.

"Gen—e—ul Sa—a—axby a sittin' on de tree ob life,
Roll, Jordan, roll,
Gen—e—ul Sa—a—axby a sittin' on the tree ob life,
Ro—o—oll, Jordan, roll,
Ro—o—oll, Jordan, roll,
Ro—o—oll, Jordan, ro—o—oll!"

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

—Reid, *After the War*, 105.

²⁹ For an example of Saxton's extreme ideas see Chapter III., p. 95.

³⁰ The second freedmen's bureau bill had failed to pass over the president's veto, Feb. 19, 1866.

was given military jurisdiction and protection over the civil rights of the citizens until the ordinary judicial proceedings and relations to the government should be restored. Special provision was made for the disposal of land in South Carolina, which will be discussed in chapter three.³¹ This law increased the power of the bureau, and enabled it to extend its sway to the remote parts of the state. In November, 1866, it was reported that the bureau was in communication with any who might require the assistance of its officers.³²

July 6, 1868, congress passed a bill authorizing the continuance of the bureau for another year, except in states fully restored to their relations with the national government. Even in such states the educational department of the bureau should be continued until suitable state provision should be made for the education of the freedmen.³³ In the same month, representatives and senators from South Carolina were admitted to congress, and Scott resigned his position as assistant commissioner to become governor of the state.³⁴ His successor, Colonel J. R. Edie, was assigned to duty by the war department July 31, 1868.³⁵ Although by the act of July 6, 1868, the bureau should have been withdrawn from South Carolina after the admission of its representatives to congress, another act, passed July 25, provided for its discontinuance in the several states after January 1, 1869, except for the educational department and the collection and payment of bounty.³⁶ Accordingly, Edie and his subordinates continued to serve until December 31, 1868, when only comparatively few officers and agents were retained.³⁷ In 1870, the bureau gave up its educational work for lack of funds,³⁸ and by act of congress, June 10, 1872, provision was made for its entire abolition after June 30 of the same year.³⁹

³¹ Statutes at Large, XIV., 174-177.

³² Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 736.

³³ Statutes at Large, XV., 82-83.

³⁴ Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina, 97.

³⁵ Howard, Report, Oct. 14, 1868, p. 26.

³⁶ Statutes at Large, XV., 193-194.

³⁷ Howard, Report, Oct. 20, 1869, p. 3.

³⁸ Howard, Report, Oct. 20, 1870, p. 7.

³⁹ Statutes at Large, XVII., 366.

CHAPTER III

DISTRIBUTION AND RESTORATION OF LAND

It will be remembered that in the first year of the war the owners of plantations on and near the sea islands of South Carolina fled at the approach of the Union Army.¹ The land thus abandoned was appropriated by the national government by acts of congress authorizing, first, the seizure and sale of lands on which the direct tax had not been paid;² second, the seizure of property of all persons engaged in aiding "the rebellion,"³ and finally the collection and sale by the treasury agents of abandoned property in the insurrectionary districts.⁴ Property was to be regarded as abandoned when the lawful owners should be "voluntarily absent therefrom, and engaged, either in arms or otherwise, in aiding or encouraging the rebellion."⁵

By March 3, 1865, when the first freedmen's bureau bill went into effect, the land seized by the government was disposed of as follows: first, land sold or leased to Northerners and negroes by the United States tax commissioners; second, land held by the negroes in forty-acre tracts for which they had possessory titles granted in accordance with Sherman's special field order; third, land occupied without authority by the negroes; fourth, land set aside by the tax commissioners as "school farms," and fifth, unoccupied land.

The first freedmen's bureau bill provided for the assignment to freedmen and refugees of 40-acre tracts of abandoned and confiscated land, with provision for the payment by them of an annual rent of six per cent of its value. The privilege of purchase was extended, with the promise that the government would provide "such title as the United States can convey."⁶ President Johnson ordered the federal officers to turn over to the freed-

¹ See p. 1 above.

² Statutes at Large, XII, pp. 292-313; 422-426; 640-641.

³ *Ibid.*, XII., pp. 589-592.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XII., pp. 820-821; XIII., pp. 375-578.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XIII., 376.

⁶ *Ibid.*, XIII., 508.

men's bureau all abandoned lands and property.⁷ For South Carolina and Georgia, Saxton received 435,000 acres of land (more than half the entire amount of land held by the bureau in the sixteen states in which it operated), and 782 pieces of town property.⁸

The system of leases made by the treasury department was maintained. At first \$6,000 a month was received by the bureau for rent, much of which was for town property in the city of Charleston. Because of restoration to former owners, the revenue so derived was reduced by November 1, 1866, to \$50 a month.⁹ Much of the land in the hands of the bureau was allotted to the freedmen, but from the beginning Howard publicly recognized that the bureau could not "convey a full and perfect title in fee simple."¹⁰

Early in 1865 the rumor spread from plantation to plantation throughout the state that the government was giving to every negro "40 acres and a mule."¹¹ The origin of the belief in gifts of 40 acres can readily be traced to Sherman's special field order and the terms of the first freedmen's bureau bill, but the added generosity of the government in the bestowal of mules can not so easily be accounted for. Possibly it was due to the negroes' belief that 40 acres without his favorite and much abused beast of burden would be worthless. Although the more conservative of the race determined to remain at home, reflecting that in the division, the "home-house" might fall to them,¹² the report that land was already being given away on the coast caused a constant stream of migration in that direction. Sidney Andrews, in a night journey from Orangeburg to Columbia in September, 1865, "met scores of them trudging along with their whole earthly possessions in a bundle on the head." To quote from him: "Walking in the bright moonlight, seventy or eighty rods ahead

⁷ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4; Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 112.

¹⁰ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 4.

¹¹ Schurz, Report, 31. Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 97, 98; *The Nation*, I., 651 (Nov. 23, 1865).

¹² Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 97, 98.

of the hack, I spoke with many. They had but few words; 'Going to Char'ston,' was often their only reply. Whether talkative or taciturn, there was a firm foot and unruffled voice for the coast."¹³

The freedmen's desire for land became in some instances an insistent demand. "What's the use to give us our freedom if we can't stay where we were raised, and own our houses where we were born, and our little pieces of ground?" was asked.¹⁴ The *South Carolina Leader* for March 31, 1866, prints over the name of a negro soldier the following: "They [the planters] have no reason to say that we will not work, for we raised them, and sent them to school, and bought their land, and now it is as little as they can do to give us some of their land—be it little or much."¹⁵ Such expressions, thought doubtless rare,¹⁶ served to infuriate the southern whites.

The freedmen's bureau was accused by many, among whom was General Grant, of originating and spreading the idea that the land was to be divided among the freedmen.¹⁷ In 1864 Saxton had expressed the opinion that "it seems to be the dictate of simple justice that they [the negroes] have the highest right to a soil they have cultivated so long by the cruelest compulsion."¹⁸ Doubtless this feeling was shared by some of his subordinates and communicated itself in some measure to the negroes. However, in the fall of 1865, seeing the disastrous effects upon labor caused by the expectation that land would be given away at New Year's, Saxton issued a circular charging his officers and agents to do all in their power to convince the negroes that their belief was groundless.¹⁹ One of the early problems of the bureau in South Carolina was to provide for the swarms of blacks then invading the coast region. Some were sent back to the interior at the

¹³ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁴ *The Nation*, I., 393 (Sept. 28, 1865).

¹⁵ *South Carolina Leader*, March 31, 1866.

¹⁶ Schurz, Report, 30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁸ Official Records, Ser. III., Vol. IV., Serial 125, p. 1025.

¹⁹ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 95.

government's expense, while others were settled upon lands by General Saxton. He estimated that 40,000 negroes had been provided with homes according to the provisions of Sherman's special field order.²⁰ In addition, over 600 certificates of title to real estate were given to negroes by the tax commissioners of South Carolina.²¹ Negro land-holders frequently hired less fortunate members of their race as laborers,²² and the *Charleston Daily Courier* reports that they were exacting task masters.²³

In Sherman's special field order it was stipulated that no white man, except military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, should be allowed on the lands set apart for the negro. Saxton's circular number 4, issued April 22, 1865, named the penalties for violation of this provision.²⁴ Edisto, Wardmelaw, James, and John's Islands were completely given over to the negroes,²⁵ and the planters, returning from the war, found it necessary to obtain permission and even protection to visit their old homes. Those who went, reported that "most of the elegant mansions . . . were cut and hacked by hatchets and axes, the doors and windows broken out, the fruit trees cut down, and everything wearing the most desolating aspect."²⁶ In one instance the family tomb had been used as a dog kennel.²⁷ As late as January, 1866, four men, who had come from Philadelphia with a view of purchasing land in the south, considered themselves fortunate to escape with their lives from a visit to John's Island. They were surrounded by a constantly increasing crowd of angry negroes, the men carrying firearms, the women brandishing hoes, pitchforks and clubs, and made to march 12 miles across the island to the quarters of the commissary department where they were rescued.

²⁰ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 221.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 6, 1866.

²⁴ Tremain, *Two Days of War*, etc., pp. 255, 256; *Charleston Daily Courier*, Oct. 10, 1865.

²⁵ *The Nation*, I., 172 (Aug. 10, 1865). *Charleston Daily Courier*, Feb. 15, 1866.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1866.

²⁷ From private letter in possession of the writer.

The Philadelphia gentlemen returned as soon as possible to the City of Brotherly Love.²⁸

May 29, 1865, President Johnson issued a proclamation of amnesty and pardon, with restoration of rights of property, to all persons who should take an oath to support the Union and abide by its laws. Exceptions were made including the Southern leaders and persons worth over \$20,000. Two kinds of property were withheld from restoration, *viz.*, slaves and property for which legal proceedings had been instituted in view of confiscation by the United States government. Provision was made for private pardon, in which case clemency was promised.²⁹

A difference of opinion early arose between Howard and the president. The former ordered his assistant commissioners to restore property only to those who could show constant loyalty, and provided for the protection of refugees and freedmen then occupying land set apart for them.³⁰ This displeased the president, who had circular number 15 prepared under his own direction and ordered Howard to issue it. The circular provided for the restoration of abandoned lands to all who could furnish proof of title³¹ and pardon and provide full and just compensation to the freedmen for their labor and expenditures.³² The order was supplemented November 30 by circular number 20, stipulating that no lands should be restored until complete and careful provision should be made for the resident refugees and freedmen.³³ This left the negro secure only in the possession of confiscated land, which was defined as land which had "been condemned and

²⁸ Charleston *Daily Courier*, Feb. 1, 11, and March 12, 1866.

²⁹ Official Records, Ser. II., Vol. 8, Serial 121, pp. 578-580.

³⁰ Howard, Autobiography II., 234, 235; Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 5.

³¹ Where the records and deeds had been destroyed, Howard accepted as proof of ownership the affidavits of two or three citizens. Charleston *Daily Courier*, Nov. 22, 1865.

³² Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 56.

³³ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 754. The use of the word "refugee" in this case seems to be a mere formality, for although the records show that a large amount of provisions was given to refugees (meaning white people), no indication can be found that land was allotted to them.

sold by decree of the United States court for the district in which the property may be found, and the title thereto vested in the United States."³⁴ In case the former owner had not been pardoned, it put upon the bureau the burden of proving that the land had been abandoned.³⁵

Delay in the restoration of lands finally caused the former owners to appeal to President Johnson, promising at the same time that they would "absorb the labor and care for the freedmen." This resulted in general order number 145 from the president, ordering Howard to South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. He was "to effect an arrangement mutually satisfactory to the freedmen and the land-owners," and was empowered to issue orders necessary to execute such a plan.³⁶ Although Howard felt that any dispossession of the negroes was a betrayal of faith on the part of the government, he restrained an impulse to resign his position, and obeyed the president's command, hoping thereby to be able to befriend the freed people.³⁷ He reached Charleston October 17, 1865. Soon afterwards, accompanied by William Whaley, the legal representative of the planters, he held a conference with over 2,000 negroes in a church on Edisto Island. Rumor having reached the negroes that land was to be taken from them, they were filled with sorrow and excitement. "In the noise and confusion no progress was to be had," says Howard, in his *Autobiography*, "till a sweet-voiced negro woman began the hymn, 'Nobody knows the trouble I feel—Nobody knows but Jesus,' which, joined in by all, had a quieting effect upon the audience." Howard then explained to them the wishes of the president, and urged them to make the best terms they could with the planters.

A committee of three was appointed from among the negroes which heard from Howard the offers of the planters. They absolutely refused to work under overseers, and asked that land

³⁴ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 56.

³⁵ Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 235, 236.

³⁶ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 6, 7. Tremain, *Two Days of War*, etc., 248, 257, 258.

³⁷ Howard, *Autobiography*, II., 237-238.

might be rented or sold to them. Finally, by unanimous consent, the assembly voted to leave the whole matter with Howard, in whom they had implicit confidence.³⁸ On October 19, Howard issued from Charleston special field order number 1, authorizing the agent of the bureau on Edisto Island to form a board of supervisors to aid in making contracts. This board was to consist of the agent "and two other citizens," one to be selected by the land owners, the other by the freedmen. An obligation which was to be signed by the planters before the land should be restored, bound them to secure to the freedmen the crops of the present year and to "take proper steps to enter into contracts" with them. In case the freedmen refused to contract within two months, they thereby surrendered the right to remain on the estates. Captain Alexander P. Ketchum was appointed to take charge of the restoration and to extend Howard's special field order number 1 to other estates affected by Sherman's famous order.³⁹

No sooner had Howard left before difficulties arose. The negroes appointed as their representative on the board a member of their own race. The planters objected on the ground that Howard's order specified that the representatives were to be "citizens." The privilege of citizenship had not yet been conferred upon the negro, and the planters gained their point, obtaining from Howard a statement that only whites were intended by him to constitute the board.⁴⁰

A more serious difficulty occurred because the negroes flatly refused to contract upon any terms, and asked to have the lands leased or sold to them. The idea that they were to be land owners had by this time become a passion with them. Some expressed their willingness to contract if the owners would sell them even one acre. Others affirmed that they would be satisfied with nothing short of the entire possession of Edisto Island.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 238-240; Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 7; Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 212, 213.

³⁹ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 7, 8.

⁴⁰ Tremain, *Two Days of War*, etc., 249-250; *Daily South Carolinian*, Jan. 17, 1866.

The planters at first refused to consider any proposition for lease or sale, and the officers of the freedmen's bureau would not restore the lands until "satisfactory arrangements" had been made with the freedmen. Thus by refusing to contract, the negroes were succeeding in retaining their land.⁴¹

The planters did not ask for a restoration of property which had been confiscated by court proceedings, but for the land of which they had been deprived without due process of law. The following is quoted from the *Charleston Daily Courier*, October 10, 1865: "Upon the theory that the state was never out of the Union, after the cessation of hostilities the citizen can only be deprived of his estate or life by proceedings for the condemnation of the one, or by conviction before a jury as to the other. There must be judicial proceedings, and one must be presumed to be innocent till his guilt be made to appear by proof. To maintain possession of the land seems to be anticipating trial, conviction and sentence."

The deadlock between the planters and the freedmen resulted not only in an increasing ill-feeling between the two classes, but also in an economic loss to the country. When the planting season of 1866 arrived, the whites were unable to regain their lands and the negroes, who were in possession, hesitated to cultivate land which they feared to lose at any moment.⁴² The question was now considered a subject for national legislation. January 5, 1866, a freedmen's bureau bill was introduced into the senate which would make valid the possessory titles granted in pursuance of Sherman's special field order.⁴³ Although the bill failed to pass over the president's veto, it stimulated the hope that definite legislative action would soon settle the difficulty.

As a temporary expedient, Howard wrote a letter to the assistant commissioner for South Carolina, March 8, 1866, ordering him to restore estates which had not been regularly allotted to the negroes.⁴⁴ This dispossessed many negroes of land on

⁴¹ Tremain, *Two Days of War*, etc., 245-277.

⁴² Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 237.

⁴³ Cong. Globe, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Part I, p. 129.

⁴⁴ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 736.

which they had made unauthorized settlements. An investigation showed that only a few who had received possessory titles had occupied the land assigned to them. With the irresponsibility and ignorance of children, they had settled wherever they chose, sometimes on a different island from the one for a portion of which they held a possessory title.⁴⁵ In executing Howard's order, Assistant Commissioner Scott provided that the negroes who had occupied their claims should in certain cases be transferred, so that the land in their possession should be contiguous. The remaining land was to be restored, with the provision that the negroes not holding grants could remain where they had been located until the planters had offered them opportunities of labor upon terms satisfactory to the freedmen's bureau.⁴⁶

At this point the military authorities of the department of South Carolina interfered and ordered all freedmen who refused to contract to remove from the plantations within ten days after such refusal. Army officers were declared judges of the fairness of the contracts, and detachments of troops enforced the order. Scott, in reporting the incident, affirmed that "the officers of these detachments in many instances took from the freedmen their certificates, declared them worthless, and destroyed them in their presence. Upon refusing to accept the contracts offered, the people in several instances were thrust out into the highways, where, being without shelter, many perished from small-pox." The freedmen's bureau, feeling that its power had been usurped by the army, remonstrated. After considerable trouble, an understanding was reached between the two authorities whereby the bureau's rights were recognized.⁴⁷ Regardless of the trouble between the military authority and the freedmen's bureau, much good was accomplished by Scott's order. In June, 1866, it was reported by one of the planters that the number of negroes holding possessory titles was few in comparison with those working under contract.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 114.

⁴⁶ General Orders No. 9. *Charleston Daily Courier*, March 10, 1866.

⁴⁷ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 114, 115.

⁴⁸ *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 6, 1866.

July 16, 1866, congress enacted over the president's veto the following provisions in regard to the land held by the freedmen's bureau in South Carolina. The two years granted by congress for redemption of lands forfeited for non-payment of direct taxes having passed, the sales made by the tax commissioners to heads of families of the African race were "confirmed and established." School farms and certain city lots were to be sold and the proceeds applied to the support of education. To each person holding a valid possessory title, granted in accordance with Sherman's special field order, was to be given a six years' lease of twenty acres. These allotments should be made by the tax commissioners from the land held by them in the parishes of Saint Luke and Saint Helena. The land so leased could be purchased by the holders at the end of six years for \$1.50 an acre. Thus the freedmen were to surrender the plantations for which the owners were clamoring, and receive in exchange a lease for half the number of acres. Restoration of land was to be made after the season's crops had been gathered and the negroes compensated by the planters for any improvements made on the property.⁴⁹

In November, 1866, Assistant Commissioner Scott reported that the lands to which the negroes were to be transferred were being surveyed by the tax commissioner, preparatory to a restoration about the first of January, 1867.⁵⁰ The accompanying table gives the official record of property in possession of the bureau and restored by it. A study of the table will show that the figures do not balance, neither do they correspond to the report of Scott, dated November 1, 1866, in which he stated that 748 houses and lots and 312,888 acres in South Carolina were in possession of the bureau on January 20, 1866.⁵¹ Because of this discrepancy it is impossible to make an accurate estimate of the amount of property restored, or of the time when the restoration took place. It will be noticed that by October, 1869, it had been ordered that

⁴⁹ Statutes at Large, XIV., 173-177.

⁵⁰ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 125.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

all abandoned lands should be restored or dropped from the returns.

| DATE OF REPORT | AMOUNT OF PROPERTY IN POSSESSION | | AMT. OF PROPERTY RETURNED (In each case since the preceding report) | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| | ACRES OF LAND | PIECES OF TOWN PROPERTY | ACRES OF LAND | PIECES OF TOWN PROPERTY |
| Dec., 1865*..... | 435,000 | 398 | | 384 |
| Nov. 1, 1866..... | 96,693 | 20 | 15278, plus certain tracts, the acreage whereof was not reported. | 626 |
| Nov. 1, 1867..... | 85,694 | 17 | 13,351 | 10 |
| Oct. 24, 1868†..... | 74,669 | 15 | 11,025 | 2 |

* The report for 1865 was for both Georgia and South Carolina, but other reports show that the bureau held nearly three times as much land in South Carolina as in Georgia.

† The Report of Oct., 1869, stated that it was ordered during the preceding year that all abandoned lands should be restored or dropped from the returns.

This chapter well illustrates how easily errors can be made in a time of strain and excitement which can as easily be criticised in the light of another generation. The story of the government's mismanagement of the problem of the abandoned lands in South Carolina is a sad one, both from the standpoint of the freedmen (whom the government was vainly trying to help), and of the real owners of the property. Three times were the negroes promised land, only to have it taken from them when they felt most secure in its possession. The inevitable result upon the negro was a restlessness and distrust of all white men which redoubled the already heavy burdens of the bureau.

From the standpoint of the dispossessed planters, the attitude of the national government was most inconsistent. They were perforce citizens of the United States, yet they were denied the rights of property guaranteed by the constitution to citizens. Their plantations, houses, even their family tombs, were turned over to the pillage and desecration of an inferior race. Meanwhile, discouraged and penniless, they returned from the war

and were forbidden to resume the cultivation of their plantations by which they could have gained a livelihood. Aside from the injustice done the negroes and the planters, the economic waste was a loss to the whole country. Fertile plantations lay idle or were poorly cultivated,⁵² and ill feeling was engendered which retarded agricultural operations in the state, and left a permanent mark on southern life.

⁵² Charleston *Daily Courier*, Feb. 6, 1866.

CHAPTER IV

LABOR, JUSTICE AND MARRIAGE RELATIONS

The summer of 1865 was a time of uncertainty and confusion for both races. The negroes were awaking to the fact that freedom brought with it responsibilities and deprivations they were ill-fitted to meet. Heretofore shelter, food, clothing and medical care had been provided for them. Now they were freed, not only from slavery, but also from the protection and care of their masters. With nothing to call their own but the clothes they wore and a few trinkets collected in slavery, they were in reality as dependent upon the whites as before the war.

The condition of the planters was no less trying. Defeated and impoverished, they returned from the war to devise some means of providing for themselves and their families. In many instances their homes had been demolished and their former slaves had followed in the wake of Sherman's army. In the coast regions their land had been seized by the government. In the interior, the fields were still theirs, but useless unless by some means planters and laborers could adapt themselves to a new and to them an untried system of labor.

Hindrances to an easy readjustment of laboring conditions were numerous. In the first place, a majority of the planters were thoroughly convinced that negroes would not work without compulsion,¹ and that in consequence free labor in the South was doomed to failure. But even though the negroes would work, the South Carolinians had no money with which to pay them, and the freedmen would not trust to promises of a fair division of the harvest. They showed a great aversion to signing any kind of written contract drawn up by the planters, fearing that by so doing they might sign away their freedom.² In the up-country, where farms were smaller and there had been more of a personal touch between master and slaves, the negroes were more in-

¹ Schurz, Report, 16. Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 25, 97, 101.

² Schurz, Report, 30.

clined to remain in their old homes and "work along" until some definite arrangement might be made. Those from the large plantations were restless and eager to try their freedom by idleness and vagrancy.³ In some instances the negroes were uninformed of their emancipation, and kept in apparent slavery.⁴

The situation between employer and employee was one which could be met only by the intervention of a third party. Early in 1865 the Union army in South Carolina undertook to act as mediator. Its officers were empowered to make written contracts for the contending parties and to collect a fee of 50 cents for each signer.⁵ It was found that the negroes' aversion to signing papers disappeared when they felt that their rights would be protected by the army. Unfortunately, this confidence was in many instances betrayed, and contracts were approved by officers of the army which were most unjust to the freedmen. It was evident that the officers' interest was largely centered in the number of fees which they could procure.⁶ In some of the contracts, clauses were inserted which bound the freedmen to work off any indebtedness which they might thereafter incur. General Hatch, commanding at Charleston, noted this tendency toward peonage and forbade any such arrangements.⁷ The ignorance of the freedmen was sometimes taken advantage of by purposely obscuring the meaning of the contract. An instance is recorded where the laborers were promised "one-third of seven-twelfths" of the crop.⁸ As a rule, a share of the crops, rather than wages, was promised. The share varied from one-tenth to one-half, from which was to be deducted the expenses of the freedmen while the crop was being made. In some districts one-half of the crop was the universal rate.⁹

³ *Ibid.*, 29; *The Nation*, I., 107 (July 27, 1865).

⁴ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 222; Schurz, Report, 18.

⁵ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 26; Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 113.

⁶ *Ibid.*; Schurz, Report, 30.

⁷ Reid, *After the War*, 84; Schurz, Report, 22.

⁸ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 259.

⁹ *Ibid.*; *The Nation*, I., 238 (Aug. 24, 1865); Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 99.

When the freedmen's bureau became organized in South Carolina, the supervision of negro labor naturally fell upon its officers. In Saxton's first circular to the freed people he urged them to prove their right to freedom by showing a will to work. "Freedmen, let not a day pass ere you find some work for your hands to do, and do it with all your might. Plough and plant, dig and hoe, cut and gather in the harvest. Let it be seen that where in slavery there was raised a blade of corn or a pound of cotton, in freedom there will be two."¹⁰

To facilitate the making of contracts, Saxton established in each district a board consisting of the sub-assistant commissioner and two residents of the district, one chosen by each contracting party.¹¹ Where no agent was within reach, the nearest postmaster was authorized to forward the duplicates of contracts to the assistant commissioner.¹² Saxton sent to his agents a form of contract to be used, which bound the planter to provide quarters, fuel, substantial and healthy rations, and all necessary medical attendance and supplies in case of sickness. The rate of wages or share in the harvest was left in each case to be determined by the agent. Contracts were to be made in duplicate, a copy given to each party, and a record of the transaction kept in the books of the bureau.¹³ Agents were forbidden to collect fees for witnessing contracts.¹⁴ Bureau officials were also intrusted with the guardianship of freed orphans, and were authorized to apprentice them in conformity with the state law regulating the apprenticeship of free white children.¹⁵

In the fall of 1865 many complaints were made to the bureau that contracts had been broken. The negroes reported cases of cruelty on the part of the whites, many of which on examination proved to be groundless. But it is undoubtedly true that much

¹⁰ Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, II., 230.

¹¹ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 95.

¹² *Ibid.*, 105.

¹³ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, pp. 89, 90.

¹⁴ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 113; This was done after Scott had assumed control of bureau affairs in S. C. Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 113.

¹⁵ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 94.

oppression and violence existed, especially in the interior portions of the state, which were unguarded by the army. Saxton found it necessary to threaten the confiscation of lands of those who failed to inform the negroes of their freedom.¹⁶ Sidney Andrews wrote in October, 1865, that he had heard two of the native South Carolinians admit that "many negroes had been beaten to death during the summer" in Edgefield district.¹⁷ Officers of the bureau sent to Saxton numerous instances of cruelty. The following are typical examples of such reports:

"One man in Anderson district was shot and killed in presence of his wife, who begged for his life. Two other men were tied up, cruelly flogged, then shot, (and it is believed killed, as the men have disappeared,) while the wife of one of the men received 50 lashes. On one plantation in Barnwell district three colored women were severely whipped, and on another a woman was unmercifully flogged because she refused to leave the place. Four white citizens, with a white soldier, broke into the house of a freedman, who was sick, tied his hands behind him, and swung him up to a post for an hour or more, then chained him and left him so for more than two days. On some of the plantations the freedmen do not get a share of all of the produce, the planters withholding the cotton crop on some plea best known to themselves. This latter practice is almost universal throughout the state."¹⁸

In many instances negroes in the fall were sent to the coast, sometimes on the promise that their employers would meet them there and pay them for their year's labor. The failure of the planters to appear left the deluded negroes to gain their living in a strange place as best they might, which was usually either by stealing or by becoming dependent upon the supplies of the freedmen's bureau.¹⁹ These statements were probably largely based on the negroes themselves.

Carl Schurz, after an investigation of southern conditions in the summer of 1865, reported that contracts were more frequently broken by the blacks than by the whites, and that "very many plantations under extensive cultivation were entirely abandoned"

¹⁶ Schurz, Report, 18; Reynolds, Reconstruction in S. C., 4.

¹⁷ Andrews, The South Since the War, 220.

¹⁸ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., pp. 222, 229; *The Nation*, I., 780 (Dec. 21, 1865).

¹⁹ *Ibid*; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., pp. 224, 226; Andrews, The South Since the War, 207.

by the laborers. Disastrous as this was to the planters, it is natural that the negroes were not seriously impressed with the obligation of the written word. The freedmen's bureau returned many such negroes to the plantations.²⁰

The question naturally arises as to the power which could enforce contracts drawn up by bureau officials. At first Saxton instructed his officers to allow the civil magistrates to administer justice, provided they acted as agents of the bureau, received negro testimony and applied to cases involving negroes the state laws intended for the whites. In the event of a refusal on the part of the magistrates to comply with these terms, the officers of the freedmen's bureau were to become the sole arbiters in all cases in which a negro was a party.²¹ In June, 1865, provost courts, consisting of an officer of the army and two citizens, were established by an order from the commander of the department of the South. These courts were to adjudicate all cases in which a freedman was either plaintiff or defendant. Sentences administered by them were not to exceed \$100 and imprisonment for two months.²² Thus it will be seen that there were three conflicting tribunals in South Carolina; civil, bureau, and provost courts.

An understanding between the provisional governor and the army was reached whereby the civil authorities surrendered all cases involving freedmen to the provost courts.²³ When the offices of assistant commissioner and state commander were merged in June, 1866, Assistant Commissioner Scott gained control of provost courts and was enabled to supervise jurisdiction over the negro.²⁴ Bureau officers adjudicated and enforced judgments in trivial cases, and referred more serious matters to the nearest provost courts.²⁵ Howard limited the sentences pronounced by his officials to a fine of \$100 and imprisonment for 30

²⁰ Schurz, Report, 30, 49.

²¹ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 90.

²² Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 117.

²³ Annual Cyclopaedia, 1865, p. 758; Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 23.

²⁴ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 116.

²⁵ Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., p. 1040.

days.²⁶ It was reported from South Carolina that the freedmen preferred the bureau courts to those of the army; and that they sometimes came on foot from 100 to 150 miles to obtain justice from the bureau, rather than intrust their cases to the military officers stationed near them.²⁷

To the leaders of congress the continued military supervision of the southern states seemed necessary. Reports reached them that the negroes were being cruelly oppressed by the native whites and that some of the latter had openly avowed that "the unconstitutional emancipation proclamation" would be set aside as soon as southern representatives were readmitted to congress.²⁸ The North felt that its worst fears were justified when in December, 1865, the South Carolina legislature enacted a code of laws for the government of the negro. These laws, known as the black code, although giving to negroes the right to acquire, own and dispose of property, undertook to prescribe most minutely the relations between master and servants. Negroes were not to be absent from the premises nor to receive visitors without the master's consent. On the farms, they were to "rise at the dawn in the morning, feed, water and care for the animals on the farm, do the usual and needful work about the premises, prepare their meals for the day, if required by the master, and begin the farm or other work by sunrise."²⁹ The black code was interpreted by the North as an attempt to re-enslave the negro, and was promptly nullified by order of General Sickles.³⁰ Congress was now thoroughly convinced that military protection of the negro must be maintained. The system of military courts³¹ wrought great injustice both to whites and blacks. On the one hand reports were made that they were partial to the whites, and that they could be

²⁶ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 719; Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 22, 23.

²⁷ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 116.

²⁸ Schurz, Report, 17, 18.

²⁹ McPherson, Political Manual, 1866, pp. 34-36. Reynolds, Reconstruction in S. C., 27-31.

³⁰ McPherson, Political Manual, 1866, pp. 36-38. Cox, Three Decades, 416.

³¹ By military courts is meant both the army and bureau courts.

bribed to do whatever the planters wished.³² Southern testimony presents a picture of unprecedented disregard of the Anglo-Saxon's claim to a fair trial. Numerous instances are given of the arrest and imprisonment of worthy citizens upon the single statement of a negro. The following are a few examples of evidence against the bureau given by Southerners: Colonel Brooks of Columbia, tells that his father, who in 1866 was living in Edgefield County, was arrested and, without being given time to put on his shoes, was made to walk barefoot half a mile. He asked why he was arrested, and the only answer given was that he had just entertained at dinner a young man who the day before "had a fuss" with a negro woman. When the crops were under cultivation the negroes frequently struck for higher wages, and nothing but the intervention of the freedmen's bureau could induce them to return. "That inducement could only be effected by the planter or farmer paying to the agent from ten to twenty dollars per head. This sum was simply a perquisite of the agent, and when paid, the negro always returned to his labors, though not receiving a cent of additional compensation. It was frequently the case that the same planter or farmer would have to compensate the bureau agent two or three times during one year, or else lose his crops." A negro lodged complaint against his employer. The officer received a gallon of whiskey from the defendant and called the matter settled. It is charged that the bureau agents fined the planters in accordance with what they thought they could get from them, and that they would even whip the negroes if paid to do so by the planters.³³

In contrast to the preceding is the report from the acting assistant commissioner for the bureau district of Charleston: "So judicious has been the administration of justice by the officers on duty in this district that applications are frequently made by whites that their differences may be heard and adjudicated by the

³² Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 225. Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 203.

³³ Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, 42 Cong., 2 Sess., Report of the Committee, pp. 441, 442; *The National Republican*, as quoted in *Charleston Daily Courier*, July 9, 1866; Private letters in possession of the writer.

sub-assistant commissioners, they having more confidence in the military civic courts than in their own local magistrates.”³⁴ The truth is that everything depended upon the character of the individual agents and officers. Were they wise and just, their decisions received the respect of both contending parties; but if they themselves were unscrupulous, the frauds committed by them brought odium and disgrace upon the whole system.

In October, 1866, civil law was restored in South Carolina, except on the sea islands and the military reservation at Hilton Head.³⁵ This resulted in many complaints of injustice toward the negro, especially in cases where the whites had broken their contracts. The freedmen were prevented from taking their cases to the state courts, for the law required every plaintiff to give bond for twice the amount for which he sued. It was reported that no magistrate “would bind over a white man for trial for the perpetration of any outrage, however villainous, unless the freedman complaining against him would give security to the amount of \$200 or \$300.”³⁶ Usually the negroes were unable to meet these conditions. Officers advised the re-establishment of military and bureau courts, and in some instances this was done.³⁷ After the passage of the civil rights bill, April 9, 1866, freedmen were privileged to sue in United States Courts in all cases where there was discrimination because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.³⁸

Having seen how cases between whites and blacks were adjudicated, let us return to the subject of contracts. Although those formed for the year 1865 did not on the whole prove successful, the freedmen’s bureau and most of the planters were anxious for the negroes to contract for the following year. But the freedmen, almost with one accord, refused to bind themselves to the planters. Doubtless this attitude was largely due to their

³⁴ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 118; Schurz, Report, 48.

³⁵ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 738; Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 117.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 123; Report of the Sec. of War., 40 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 669, 670.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 670-672.

³⁸ Statutes at Large, XIV., 27-29.

expectation that land would be given them at Christmas or New Year's.³⁹ Saxton, in a general circular, tried to correct the impression, and called upon the freedmen to enter into contracts at once.⁴⁰

Three kinds of contracts were adopted in South Carolina; agreements that the negroes should work for regular wages, agreements that they should work for the planters for a share of the crop, and agreements in which the planter furnished the land and equipment, the renter paying a portion of the crop. The first system was used by most of the Northern immigrants and by a few Southerners with ready money at command.⁴¹ It proved the most satisfactory to both parties. The last mentioned plan was largely confined to the sea islands, and was reported as not successful.⁴² The Darlington planters met in December and adopted a form of contract which received the approval both of Saxton and of the Sumter, Kershaw and Clarendon planters. This provided that the freedmen should receive one-third of the crop, and contained many of the regulations for the government of the negro found in the black code.⁴³ This contract was not accepted readily by the freedmen, with the result that the New Year opened with but few agreements as to labor.

Much confusion followed. Some negroes, who refused to work for the terms offered, remained on the plantations and were a constant drain upon the planters' supplies. Others, ejected from their former homes, became vagrants or beneficiaries of the bureau's bounty. There was great need of a controlling influence. January 8, 1866, Saxton issued an order forbidding plan-

³⁹ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 26; Andrews, *The South Since the War*, 221, 222; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 229.

⁴⁰ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 95.

⁴¹ The rate of wages varied greatly, ranging from \$20 a year with no rations to \$180 with rations. See foot notes below.

⁴² *The Nation*, I., 393 (Sept. 28, 1865); Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 123; *Charleston Daily Courier*, Jan. 5, 1866; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 234.

⁴³ See Appendix A following for a copy of the contract. The Darlington form of contract was later repudiated by Saxton. Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 240.

ters to remove freedmen from their plantations unless the latter had refused to enter into "fair and reasonable contracts." No freedman could be removed without the consent of an agent of the bureau.⁴⁴ Saxton's order was supplemented by one from General Sickles, dated January 23. This forbade a freedman to remain on a plantation if he had refused to work there "after having been offered employment by the owner or lessee on fair terms, approved by the agent of the freedmen's bureau." It also provided that vagrants should be put to work on public roads and fortifications, or be hired out to labor for a period of one year.⁴⁵ This order was commended by the Charleston *Daily News*, which reported on January 25 that the negroes in the upper districts had generally gone to work, and that on the seaboard they showed more readiness to enter into contracts.

When Scott became assistant commissioner for South Carolina, he repudiated the Darlington contract and recommended one which differed from it in the following respects: Freedmen were not to invite visitors upon the premises, nor to absent themselves from the same *during working hours*, without consent. Freedmen were to perform reasonable daily tasks ten hours a day, *unless the weather was such as actually to forbid labor, or they were excused by the employer*. In such cases there were to be *no deductions*. If absent more than *three* days without leave, unless on account of sickness or other unavoidable cause, a freedman should be subject to dismissal from the plantation, and forfeiture of his or her share of the crop. The employer, however, should pay the party dismissed \$5.00 a month for full hands, deducting advances. *Neither party* should sell or use any portion of the crop until after division of the same, without the consent of the other party, and each employee should be provided with a pass book in which entries of advances, absences, etc., should be kept. Each head of a family should be allowed *one-half* acre of land for his own use; quarter-acre tracts being allotted to all others. Employees should not be compelled

⁴⁴ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 229.

⁴⁵ Charleston *Daily Courier*, January 24, 1866.

to work upon the Fourth of July, Christmas, New Year's, national and state Thanksgiving and fast days, unless the work to be done was a work of necessity or mercy. No deduction should be made for not working on these days. Female employees who were heads of families were required to work only one-half day on Saturdays.⁴⁶ A comparison of these terms with those of the Darlington contract, found in Appendix A, will show that Scott annulled the most objectionable provisions of that document.

By May, 1866, the assistant commissioner reported that the negroes "had entered into contracts with a willingness and unanimity beyond the expectation of the most sanguine persons in the State. . . . Planters asserted that in most cases they were 'doing more work than was ever done under the old system of forced labor.'"⁴⁷ However, reports of outrages were numerous, especially from Barnwell, Edgefield, Newberry, Laurens and Chester districts. There, mounted bands of "regulators" rode about the country terrifying the negroes, and committing many acts of cruelty and depredation toward freedmen and northern whites. It was reported that they had made an offer to the planters that upon the payment of a fixed sum per head they would kill any freedmen who would not contract.⁴⁸ The condition was so bad that for a time General Sickles contemplated the removal to Columbia of the entire negro population from Edgefield, Newberry and Laurens. The citizens of that section of the state affirmed that the regulators were men from Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas who had been in the southern army, and who were prevented by their crimes from returning home.⁴⁹

The results in 1866 were not satisfactory. Severe drought had greatly damaged the crops. The corn crop upon which the people largely depended for food was reported as an utter fail-

⁴⁶ *Weekly Record*, February 10, 1866.

⁴⁷ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 737.

⁴⁸ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 112, 113.

⁴⁹ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 234; *Charleston Daily Courier*, March 21, 1866; *Philadelphia Enquirer*, March 16, 1866; *New York Times*, June 13, 1866; The Steedman-Fullerton Report; *Newberry Herald*, March 14, 1866, as quoted in *Charleston Daily Courier*, March 24, 1866.

ure.⁵⁰ The acting assistant commissioner for Sumter, Darlington, Chesterfield, Marlborough and Marion reported that in his district contracts had generally been regarded by both parties.⁵¹ On James Island it was estimated that the freedmen would realize about \$300 each for the year's work.⁵² With the exceptions given above, the outlook at the close of the year was discouraging. Contracts had been broken, many of both races were actually destitute, violence and outrages against the negroes were of common occurrence, and there was much ill-feeling on all sides. This condition of affairs was largely attributed by officers of the bureau to the restoration of civil law.⁵³

Before the contracts for 1866 had expired, the freedmen of South Carolina became possessed of the desire to emigrate. June 21, President Johnson had signed an act by which public land was opened to settlement.⁵⁴ *The Nation* reports that thousands of negroes, especially from the interior and northern districts of North Carolina, emigrated to Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Liberia, and that many of them had abandoned plantations which they had bound themselves by contracts to cultivate. Those who settled on the public lands were promised six months' rations after their arrival. Others went on contracts which secured to them from six to twelve dollars a month.⁵⁵

The decreasing supply of labor resulted in the spring of 1867 in more liberal contracts. Greater kindness⁵⁶ and consideration on the part of the planters were reported. The crops for the year were greatly damaged by wet weather and the caterpillar, so that the returns were most inadequate. "The offices of agents were thronged with planters and freedmen calling upon them to settle differences and divide crops," and in many instances the

⁵⁰ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 113, 114, 118; Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 737.

⁵¹ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 119, 120.

⁵² Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 118.

⁵³ Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 669-672.

⁵⁴ Statutes at Large, XIV., 66, 67.

⁵⁵ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 123; *The Nation*, Vol. III, 203, 263, 511; *Ibid.*, IV., 43, 143, 227.

⁵⁶ Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 670.

books of the planters showed that the negroes had spent their wages in advance. The price of cotton was so low that the planters were in debt as a result of the year's work. In the following winter there was much suffering and special agents were sent out by the bureau to distribute supplies to the needy of both races.⁵⁷

The report for 1868 shows improvement both in the terms of the contracts and in the manner in which they were kept. Politics had begun to influence the relation between planters and laborers, and in some districts the land-owners formed clubs in which they agreed to hire no laborers whose vote they could not control. Nevertheless there were fewer cases of outrage than in the preceding year, and it was conceded that the freedmen were "doing better labor and with less trouble than at any previous time since the emancipation."⁵⁸ After 1868, the bureau's supervision of labor ceased.

The freedmen's bureau assumed control of another form of contract, marriages among the negroes. Before the war, the system of slavery had tended to promote great laxness in marital relations. Favorite slaves as a special favor were accorded a marriage ceremony, but in most cases an agreement between the contracting parties, sanctioned by the master, was deemed sufficient. The relationship so easily assumed, was as easily broken, and but little idea of the sacredness of the marriage bond was known to the negroes.⁵⁹ The coming of freedom had tended to complicate an already disordered condition. Negroes found themselves free to renew former marriages which had been terminated by the sale of one of the contracting parties. In many instances one man had two or more living wives, each of whom in turn had more than one husband. This was the problem which confronted the freedmen's bureau, and which it endeavored to solve.

Saxton was deeply impressed with the importance of promot-

⁵⁷ Howard, Report, Oct. 24, 1868, pp. 27, 28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁹ Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., Vol. 1, p. 1041.

ing proper domestic relationships among the negroes. In his first circular to the freedmen he called upon them to lead virtuous lives and to "study, in church and out of it, the rules of the marriage relation issued from these headquarters."⁶⁰ The following are some of the rules to which he referred: Parties living together as husband and wife at the time of emancipation were acknowledged as legally married, but they were required to have their marriage confirmed by a minister (if it had not already been done) and to obtain from him a certificate. Ministers were authorized to charge one dollar each for these certificates. When a negro, living alone at the time of emancipation, had a former wife restored to him by freedom, he was charged to receive her as his lawful wife. In case there were two or more such wives, only one of whom had borne him children, the mother of his children should be received by him.⁶¹ Where the claims of different wives were equal, the presumption is that he could choose between them. Chaplain J. H. Fowler was appointed by Saxton to carry out the foregoing order in South Carolina and Georgia.⁶² Later on, the work in South Carolina was intrusted to the Reverend Mansfield French.⁶³ Clergymen were instructed to make a return to the bureau of all marriages solemnized by them, and a careful registration was kept.⁶⁴

At first there was some confusion and excitement among the negroes, especially in cases where a man had to choose between two or more wives. The requirement of a money payment for certificates which they were forced to obtain caused considerable inconvenience to the negroes, and criticism from the southern whites.⁶⁵ But on the whole this department of the bureau's work was beneficial, bringing order out of the chaos of confused domestic relationships, and stimulating the freedmen to purer habits of life.

⁶⁰ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 231.

⁶¹ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, pp. 108-111.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁶³ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 124, 125.

⁶⁴ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 23, 45.

⁶⁵ Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, 42 Cong., 2 Sess.; Report of the Committee, p. 442.

CHAPTER V

GOVERNMENT RELIEF

The impoverishing effects of war have never been more keenly felt than in the Southern States after the Civil War. The confederacy had strained every resource to maintain its existence. Boys and old men had filled up the rapidly depleting ranks of the army, leaving at home only women, children, and negroes to provide food for themselves and for the soldiers. In the midst of this struggle came General Sherman, burning homes and emptying scanty stores. Fortunes were risked and lost, and finally, in many instances, the land alone was left. Naturally, the owners tried to sell some of their real estate, but they met with little success, for all were poor alike. The daily newspapers of the period sometimes contain in one issue as many as thirty notices of bankruptcy.¹

The negroes shared the destitution of their former owners. To the great credit of their race, many of them had faithfully served during the war, showing a loyalty to their masters' interests and an unselfish devotion to duty that have no parallel in history. General Howard admitted, in his first report, that as a general rule the Southerners were caring as well as they could for the negroes who remained on the plantations.² But thousands had left their homes and were looking to the government for support. Even among those who had been assigned land along the seacoast, there were many orphaned children and adults too old and infirm to work, and the able-bodied were destitute until the crops could be harvested. Temporary help from some source was necessary.

¹ Sen. Doc., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, Vol. I, p. 118; Contemporary Newspapers.

² Gen. Howard's Report, Dec., 1865, pp. 15-16.

The first freedman's bureau bill provided that "the Secretary of War may direct such issues of provisions, clothing, and fuel, as he may deem needful for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children, under such rules and regulations as he may direct."³ In careless hands, such an unlimited opportunity of giving might easily have engendered idleness and pauperism. Already, because of the large supplies given out by the army, many negroes and poor whites seemed to think they were to be permanent recipients of food.⁴ Howard recognized the need of precaution and ordered that aid should be given only "to the helpless and destitute classes of refugees and freedmen, the sick, the very old, and orphans too young to earn their own support."⁵ However, advances of rations were furnished to able-bodied but destitute refugees and freedmen, and a lien taken upon their crops.⁶ To prevent fraud, only small issues were made at a time, and the order had to be signed by a commissioned officer, approved by a commanding officer of the post or station, and where practicable by the assistant commissioner.⁷ Whitelaw Reid reported in 1865 that the negroes were making haste to repay the government for these loans.⁸ Statistics show a lessening amount of rations issued in the fall of that year.⁹

Early in 1866 there were two causes for an increased need of government relief. The hundreds of negroes who had flocked to the coast to receive their Christmas gifts of forty acres and a mule now filled Charleston and vicinity with a penniless and disappointed class of the unemployed. In the second place, planters were anxious to resume the cultivation of their lands, but had

³ U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 13, p. 508.

⁴ Gen. Howard's report, Dec., 1865, p. 15.

⁵ Ex. Doc., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 6.

⁶ Ex. Doc., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸ Reid, Whitelaw, *The South After the War*, 92. When the sea islands were restored to their former owners, Gen. Howard directed that the freedmen should not be required to repay these advances. *Charleston Daily Courier*, July 4, 1866.

⁹ *The Nation*, I., 780.

nothing wherewith to feed the laborers until the harvest. In this emergency, the freedmen's bureau issued rations to the planters of South Carolina for the resident freedmen in their employ. The price charged was the actual cost of the provisions at place of delivery, and payment could be made either in money or by giving a lien on the crops.¹⁰

February 10, 1866, Assistant Commissioner Scott issued from Charleston General Order No. 8, which reads as follows:

"I. A camp for destitute and unemployed freed persons will be established on the grounds near Magnolia Peninsula. II. All freed persons residing in this city to whom rations are issued, and all who may come here, will report at once to the officers who may be designated by the Assistant Commissioner to command the camp, for assignment to quarters. III. Tents for shelter, etc., will be drawn up by the officer in charge upon requisition approved by these headquarters. IV. All rations issued to destitute refugees and freedmen will be issued by the camp as soon as it is organized, and such rations will be issued to the freedmen only who are unable to procure employment after diligent exertions. V. Mr. Gilbert Pillsbury is charged with the organization and temporary superintendence of the camp, until some commissioned officer is designated by the Assistant Commissioner to take command. VI. All persons desiring to employ laborers will apply in writing to these Headquarters or in person to Mr. Pillsbury."¹¹

A liberal interpretation of the word refugee was made to include such destitute whites as were in real need of government aid for their support. General Scott reported that "on issuing days might be seen the white lady of respectability standing side by side with the African, both awaiting their turn to receive their weekly supply of rations."¹²

From the first, General Howard and his assistants felt that relief by the national government should be only a temporary measure and that as soon as possible all dependents should be cared for by their own communities.¹³ With this idea in view, Circular No. 10 was issued from Washington, August 22, 1866, which announced that on and after the first of October of that year issues of rations should be discontinued, except to refugees

¹⁰ The Charleston *Daily Courier*, Feb. 1, 10, 13, 1866.

¹¹ *Weekly Record*, Feb. 17, 1866.

¹² The Charleston *Daily Courier*, Feb. 1, 1866. Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 113.

¹³ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 95.

and freedmen in regularly organized hospitals and orphan asylums already in existence.¹⁴ This order came at an inopportune time for South Carolina. In May, 1866, two tornadoes had swept over the coast region of the state, destroying crops and demolishing the freedmen's village on Port Royal Island and nearly all of Saint Helensville.¹⁵ Other agencies combined to cause an almost complete failure of the corn supply of the entire state during the winter of 1866 and 1867 so that thousands faced actual starvation.¹⁶

The state legislature considered the matter of relief, but a bill to provide corn for the destitute failed to pass.¹⁷ Finally the suffering became so great that congress, by joint resolution, authorized a special relief fund from money already appropriated to the freedmen's bureau.¹⁸ Accordingly, half a million dollars was expended to relieve the famine in the Southern States, and in addition help was sent by the Southern Relief Association. Special agents, who worked without pay, distributed supplies from these two sources to the destitute of both races. The official reports state that "the conditions in remote districts were appalling. Women and children in a starving condition flocked to officers of the bureau, walking from twenty to forty miles to reach them."¹⁹ In 1867, during the months from May to October, 19,124 whites and 35,698 negroes were aided in South Carolina by the special relief fund and \$110,138.09 of public money was expended.²⁰

In 1868, the freedmen's bureau again dispensed relief, especially to negroes who had planted crops but were unable to support themselves until the harvest. In such cases help was given only after an investigation had proved that enough food supplies were under cultivation to repay advances and to support the family

¹⁴ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 712.

¹⁵ *The Nation*, Vol. 2, p. 658.

¹⁶ *Charleston Advocate*, Feb. 23, 1867; Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 670, 671.

¹⁷ *The Charleston Advocate*, Feb. 23 and March 2, 1867.

¹⁸ U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 15, p. 28.

¹⁹ Report of Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 670, 671.

²⁰ Gen. Howard's Report, Nov. 1, 1867, p. 30.

during the next year. In every case of issue, formal bonds were taken.²¹ After 1868, no supplies were given by the bureau.²² The accompanying table gives the number of rations issued to refugees and freedmen in South Carolina each year, with the corresponding number issued to all the districts covered by the bureau. It will be noticed that the supply decreased each year (except for the Special Relief Fund of 1867), and that South Carolina received a large share of the distribution.²³ The figures are from the reports of General Howard.

THE NUMBER OF RATIONS ISSUED TO DEPENDENT REFUGEES AND
FREEDMEN FROM JUNE 1, 1865, TO SEPTEMBER 1, 1868,
IN THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

| | REFUGEES | FREEDMEN | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| June 1, 1865 to Sept. 1, 1866 | 124,144 | 987,703 | 1,111,847 |
| Sept. 1, 1866 to Sept. 1, 1867 | 242,643 | 810,309 | 1,052,952 |
| Sept. 1, 1867* to Sept. 1, 1868 | 17,927 | 93,626 | 111,553 |

* This does not appear to include the additional expenditure of \$110,-138.09 by the Special Relief Fund of 1867. Gen. Howard's Report, Oct. 20, 1869, p. 7. Circular No. 8, issued June 20, 1865 reads as follows:

"The following ration, being substantially that established by General Orders No. 30, War Dept., 1864, is republished. *Ration*—Pork or bacon, 10 oz., in lieu of fresh beef; fresh beef, 16 oz., flour and soft bread, 16 oz., twice a week; hard bread, 12 oz., in lieu of flour or soft bread; corn meal, 16 oz., 5 times a week; beans, peas, or hominy, 10 lbs., to 100 rations; sugar, 8 lbs., to 100 rations; vinegar, 2 qts., to 100 rations; candles, adamantine or star, 8 oz., to 100 rations; soap, 2 lbs., to 100 rations; salt, 2 lbs., to 100 rations; pepper, 20 oz., to 100 rations. Women and children, in addition to the foregoing ration, are allowed roasted rye coffee, at the rate of 10 lbs., or tea at the rate of 15 oz., to each 100 rations. Children under 14 yrs. of age are allowed half rations. Issues of provisions on short periods of time, not exceeding 7 days, signed by a commissioned officer and approved by the commanding officer of the post or station, and when practicable by the assistant commissioner." Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 47 (Gen. Howard's Report).

²¹ Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 3rd Sess., Vol. 1, p. 1041.

²² Report of Gen. Howard, Oct. 20, 1869, pp. 20-21.

²³ The number of districts varied from 12 to 14.

| | | | |
|---|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Total from June 1, 1865 to Sept. 1, 1868 | 384,714 | 1,891,638 | 2,276,352 |
|---|---------|-----------|-----------|

TOTAL FOR ALL THE DISTRICTS OF THE BUREAU

| | REFUGEES | FREEDMEN | TOTAL |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| June 1, 1865 to Sept. 1, 1866 | 4,507,922 | 8,904,451½ | 13,412,373½ |
| Sept. 1, 1866 to Sept. 1, 1867 | 692,548 | 3,504,629 | 4,197,177 |
| Sept. 1, 1867* to Sept. 1, 1868 | 238,119 | 2,564,359 | 2,802,478 |
| Total from June 1, 1865 to Sept. 1, 1868 | 5,438,589 | 14,973,439½ | 20,412,028½ |

Supplies of clothing were also given out by the freedmen's bureau. A large amount of army clothing, condemned as unfit for the troops, was distributed to the poor and needy.²⁴ In addition, \$252,547.35 of clothing was purchased and distributed in the various districts. There is no record to show the proportion received by the freedmen and refugees in South Carolina.

What was the effect of this benevolent paternalism on the part of the government? Doubtless there were some who took undue advantage of the government's liberality. For example, an instance is on record of a negro who walked one hundred miles to obtain half a bushel of corn meal from the bureau, when in the same time he might have earned nine times the amount by honest labor.²⁵ Generals Steedman and Fullerton, sent out by the secretary of war to make an official investigation of the freedmen's bureau, charged General Saxton with too free a bestowal of government supplies and commended his successor, General Scott, for reducing the issue of rations.²⁶ But as the

²⁴ Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 7.

²⁵ Winston, George T., *Relation of the Whites to the Negroes*, 113.

²⁶ *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 16 and July 4, 1866.

Nation pointed out, such a charge was of little moment, coming just at the time when great destitution was reported from South Carolina and General Scott was asking permission to issue an increased number of rations.²⁷

Strange as it may seem, a careful study of the situation leads to the conclusion that where error was made, it was usually made on the side of extreme caution rather than of excessive liberality. So great was the desire to avoid giving too freely, that a system of red tape was established, so inelastic that in many cases real sufferers could obtain no relief. The joint committee on reconstruction reported that personal attendance was required of all applicants for help. Many maimed, bedridden, and infirm persons were unable to comply with such orders and it was reported that some had starved to death.²⁸ Colonel U. R. Brooks, of Columbia, testified that an old negro, formerly belonging to his father, put himself entirely in the hands of the bureau and met the same fate. It will be noticed that the order for the personal attendance of applicants came from the army, and there is no doubt that its interference caused much suffering for which the bureau was blamed.

On the whole, this department of the bureau, in which there was so much opportunity for graft and unwise liberality, and in which there was interference from the army, was handled with prudence and foresight. The loan of provisions to planters for the use of their employees was commended by the *Charleston Daily Courier* of February 1, 1866, as follows: "The provision thus made is humane and judicious, and will prove of great assistance in facilitating the efforts to bring quickly to cultivation lands which might have been unemployed. Nor less judicious is the liberal interpretation of 'refugees.'"²⁹

Closely connected with the distribution of rations and clothing, was the medical department of the bureau. During the war, the army had undertaken the care of sick negroes. Upon the

²⁷ *The Nation*, Vol. 2, p. 754.

²⁸ Report of Joint Com. on Reconstruction, Part II, p. 223; Report of Joint Com. on Reconstruction, Part VII, p. 41.

²⁹ See Page 69.

organization of the bureau, General Howard at once appointed Surgeon Caleb W. Horner as chief medical officer of the bureau, and William R. DeWitt, of the United States Volunteers, was assigned to duty as surgeon in chief for South Carolina. The bureau was assisted in its medical care of the refugees and freed-men both by the army, benevolent associations, and the civil authorities. Medical and hospital provisions were supplied by the surgeon general of the army, and co-operation with civil authorities was encouraged. The *Nation* of March 1, 1866, quotes Surgeon DeWitt as saying that the civil authorities had promised to pay all the physicians, stewards, nurses and cooks and that the bureau had only to furnish medicine for the freed people.³⁰

By November 1, 1866, General Howard reported that the benefits of the medical department had spread to the remote parts of the state and that its work was gratefully appreciated.³¹ A year later, the policy of the bureau was to diminish the number of hospitals and asylums, and to replace them where necessary with dispensaries. It was found that the latter were more economical and that they tended to make the beneficiaries more provident.³² By June 30, 1869, the medical work of the bureau in the state was turned over to the civil authorities. In many cases, hospital equipment and medicines were given them by the bureau as an inducement to undertake the care of the sick.³³ No detailed record of such transfers is given in the reports, so it is impossible to know how much of this was done in South Carolina.

The work of the medical department of the bureau is worthy of praise. In fact, much more was reported as done in South Carolina than in any other bureau district. During the year ending June 30, 1868, over six times as many refugees were treated in South Carolina as in the other twelve districts combined.³⁴ This may have been caused largely by the co-operation

³⁰ The *Nation* II, 260.

³¹ Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 737.

³² Messages and Documents, 1867-1868, p. 478.

³³ Report of Gen. Howard, Oct. 20, 1869, p. 17.

³⁴ Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1867, p. 12.

with civil authorities. If so, credit is due for the conciliatory policy that made such co-operation possible. It is worthy of notice that among adverse criticisms of the bureau, this department escaped. All classes gratefully acknowledged its helpfulness and gladly gave it their co-operation. It did a great work in preventing, as well as in curing, disease. The reports record over 4,000 vaccinations and a yearly lowering of the percentage of deaths among those treated.

With so much that speaks for itself of the ability of the man in charge of this department in South Carolina, we are not surprised to find the following in the report of Robert Reyborn, chief medical officer for the bureau: "While so many excelled, it may appear invidious to distinguish, yet the energy and marked administrative ability of Dr. M. K. Hogan, surgeon-in-chief, district of South Carolina and late brevet colonel and surgeon, United States Volunteers, entitle him to special mention."³⁵

³⁵ Report of Gen. Howard, Oct. 20, 1869, pp. 16, 17. Surgeon Hogan replaced Surgeon DeWitt sometime after Nov. 1, 1866.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION

Before the war, South Carolina maintained no state system of public schools, as we now understand the term. She did, however, support free schools for children whose parents were unable to give them any educational advantages. These schools were strictly for the indigent class and attendance was not compulsory.¹ By a state law of 1834, it was made a punishable offense to teach any slave to read or write.² As a matter of fact, this law was not strictly enforced, and numbers of house slaves were taught by their owners, but the great mass of them were of course uneducated. In 1860 there were in the state 9,914 free negroes, over 3,000 of whom lived in Charleston, where in their own school many had received some instruction.³ The city granted a license to the teachers of free negroes, with a provision that a white person should be present during the instruction.⁴

When Charleston was occupied by the Union forces in February, 1865, James Redpath, of Massachusetts, was at once appointed superintendent of education for the city. He immediately took possession of the public school buildings and reopened them for the use of black and white children in separate rooms. Employment was offered to all the former teachers of the city. Some accepted the offer, while other teachers were procured from the North and from the free negro class. The New York and New England societies assumed the responsibility for the teachers' salaries.⁵ Redpath reported that 11 schools were set in operation, in which were over 3,000 negro and nearly 1,000 white children.⁶ The *Charleston Daily Courier* gave the enroll-

¹ Reynolds, John S., *Reconstruction in South Carolina*, 134.

² Hurd, John C., *Law of Freedom and Bondage*, II, 98.

³ *Population of the U. S. in 1860*, 452.

⁴ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, 251; *The Nation*, Nov. 27, 1865.

⁵ *The American Freedman*, May, 1866, p. 29.

⁶ *The New York Evening Post*, Feb. 26, 1866; *The American Freedman*, May, 1866, p. 29.

ment for the same period as 1,004, and stated that one-sixth of the number were white.⁷

The establishment of schools on the sea islands has already been described in Chapter VI. These schools were maintained throughout the war by the help of Northern philanthropic societies. After 1863, revenues from the rent and sale of land by the United States tax commissioners were devoted to school purposes,⁸ and in August, 1865, General Saxton reported that 15 schools on the islands were supported in this manner.⁹ The work of education was also carried on at the army posts, where officers of the line and chaplains became the teachers, and colonels, the superintendents. The 128th United States colored troops at Beaufort received special mention for their educational work. Even in hospitals some teaching was done.¹⁰

By the fall of 1865, the freedmen's bureau in South Carolina had taken charge of the schools for refugees and freedmen. Reuben Tomlinson, of Philadelphia, was appointed state superintendent and remained in that position until October 19, 1868. He was succeeded first by Brevet Major Horace Neide and on July 10, 1869, by Brevet Major Edward L. Deane. Tomlinson was commended by J. W. Alvord, General Superintendent of Schools for the bureau, as "eminently successful." "A large amount of what has been accomplished in that State" [South Carolina], wrote Mr. Alvord in 1869, "is due to his untiring efforts."¹¹ In circular number 2, dated May 19, 1865, Howard stated the educational policy of the bureau as follows: "The utmost facility will be offered to benevolent and religious organizations and state authorities in the maintenance of good schools for refugees and freedmen until a system of free schools can be supported by the reorganized local governments. It is not my purpose to supersede the benevolent agencies already engaged in

⁷ Charleston *Daily Courier*, July 3, 1865.

⁸ Report of J. W. Alvord, January 1, 1869, pp. 20-21.

⁹ *The Nation*, I, 227.

¹⁰ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, pp. 249-250. Report of J. W. Alvord, January 1, 1869, pp. 3-4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1869, p. 20, and January 1, 1870, p. 23.

the work of education, but to systematize and facilitate them."¹²

For the first year of its existence, the bureau was hampered by lack of funds. During that time no money was appropriated by congress for educational purposes, so that the bureau was able to help the philanthropic societies only by supervision, transportation of teachers, and in many cases by the occupation of buildings in possession of the bureau. Teachers authorized by the Assistant Commissioner and actually on duty, were allowed to purchase rations of the government under the same rules as applied to the commissioned officers of the army.¹³ The *Nation* reports that Tomlinson was so anxious to lose no time in reopening the Charleston schools, that he expended about a thousand dollars of his private means in the repair of school buildings.¹⁴

In 1866, the educational department of the bureau was put upon a financial basis. By the act of July 16, commissioners were authorized to "seize, hold, lease or sell for school purposes" land and other property belonging to them.¹⁵ The same year, congress, in its appropriations for the bureau, specified that money could be expended for "repairs and rent of school houses and asylums."¹⁶ Salaries of teachers, however, were not provided for by the government, and were still paid by philanthropic societies, private individuals or by the freedmen themselves.

Considering the poverty of the negroes, the amount they contributed toward education is remarkable. Tomlinson reported in July, 1867, that the colored people of the state had given \$17,200 for school purposes during the previous year.¹⁷ Many of the schools were made self-supporting through the payment by the pupils of small tuition fees. In 1868, it was estimated that there were in South Carolina at least 8,000 pupils in these self-sustaining schools.¹⁸

¹² *Ibid.*, July 1, 1868, p. 23.

¹³ Report of J. W. Alvord, Jan. 1, 1868, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 47. Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, p. 250.

¹⁵ The *Nation*, I, 779 (Nov. 27, 1865).

¹⁶ U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV., 175.

¹⁷ Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1866, p. 61.

¹⁸ Report of J. W. Alvord, July 1, 1867, p. 23.

The eagerness with which the negroes had at first taken advantage of educational opportunities was unabated. Many were anxious to become teachers, and all seemed to feel that their hope of advancement lay in education. In many cases the laborers attended evening and Sunday classes.¹⁹ Throughout the South were found groups of negroes, old and young, taught by members of their own race who had in some way gained a smattering of learning. Such groups were unreported, and it is impossible to estimate their numbers, but they well illustrate the negro's thirst for knowledge and the impatience of the race to wait for the coming of regular teachers.

In opposition to the desire for education on the part of the blacks and the response of the Northern societies, was the hostility of the Southern whites to the establishment of negro schools. This feeling was based on the almost universal belief among the former slaveholders that an educated negro was a spoiled negro. The experiment was undertaken by those whom they felt to be their enemies, and they feared it would wreck the entire industrial life of the South.²⁰ The opposition was stronger in the country than in the city.²¹ After a tour of the state in 1865, Tomlinson is reported by the *Nation* as saying that outside of Charleston he believed no colored school could be maintained a month after the withdrawal of Federal troops.²²

The reports of the superintendent of schools give instances of the breaking up of negro schools by force and intimidation. As a general rule, Northern teachers of these schools were not received in boarding houses for whites and were often insultingly treated. Tomlinson reported that the school house at Columbia

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1866, p. 1, and July 1, 1869, p. 3; Report of the Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 737. It is an interesting fact that by a South Carolina statute, persons convicted of certain crimes, such as burglary and arson, were exempted from the death penalty if they could read and write. See Report of Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 672.

²⁰ Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, pp. 246, 247, and Part III, p. 34. Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, 42 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 279.

²¹ Schurz, Carl, Report, 25-26; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, p. 233 and Part III, p. 35.

²² *The Nation*, I., 779.

was burned, the night school at Orangeburg was fired upon, and at Walhalla some native whites hired a drunken vagabond negro to attend the school and accompany the teacher, a white woman from Vermont, home through the village streets. Other instances could be given, but the above are typical cases.²³ The city of Charleston, however, afforded an exception to the wide spread opposition to negro schools. Because of the presence before the war of educated free negroes, the people of Charleston had become accustomed to the idea of negro education and had found that a certain amount of learning made them better members of the community. Hence, when the city schools were opened to negroes in the spring of 1865, the opposition of the whites was centered upon the occupying of the public school houses by negroes, rather than upon negro education itself.²⁴ The Home Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church led the way in the support of negro education by the white people of the state. That society purchased at auction in 1866 the Marine Hospital building at Charleston where the Rev. A. Toomer Porter, former chaplain of the army, opened a school and orphan home for negro children. At the same time he maintained a school for white children in a separate building. A part of the purchase money for the Marine Hospital was raised in the North, President Andrew Johnson contributing a check of a thousand dollars.²⁵

Gradually, opposition to negro schools began to break down throughout the state, especially in the cities and towns. Supt. Tomlinson in July, 1867, reported as follows: "I visited Columbia, Camden, Sumter, Timmons ville, Darlington, Marion, Cheraw, Florence, Kingstree, and intermediate points, and I am confirmed in the conviction (if confirmation were needed) that nothing so rapidly tends to produce harmony between the white

²³ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, p. 218; Report of J. W. Alvord, Jan. 1, 1867, pp. 11 and 28; July 1, 1867, p. 19; Jan. 1, 1868, p. 8; Jan. 1, 1870, p. 26. Howard, O. O., Autobiography, II, 383.

²⁴ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II, p. 251.

²⁵ *The Nation*, II, 770, and III, 103 and 383. *Charleston Advocate*, Oct. 10, 1868. Howard, O. O., Autobiography, II, 339.

and colored people as the establishment of schools among them. Take the towns enumerated above as examples. In no other places was greater opposition, short of violence, manifested toward colored schools than in these places when the first schools were started. I question very much whether now a half dozen men of intelligence can be found in any of these places who would not deem it a public calamity to have the schools discontinued. I do not mean to assert that any active sympathy is shown, or that the white people in any of these localities are ready to co-operate with us. The time has not come for this. But in most of these localities, the residents in the immediate neighborhood of the schools have ceased to speak with bitterness of them, and generally treat the teachers with politeness. In Columbia a very marked change in public feeling towards the schools has taken place. The mayor of the city has visited them, and after expressing the greatest satisfaction with all he saw, took occasion at a meeting of the council to advise all its members to visit the schools also."²⁶

In several instances, planters sought bureau headquarters for advice and information in regard to the establishment of schools in their neighborhood.²⁷ It was discovered that negroes were dissatisfied in places where their children could not attend school, and in some cases clauses, providing for education of the children, were inserted in the laborers' contracts. Thus the planters who provided school privileges for the negroes obtained a more permanent and efficient class of laborers.²⁸ Instances are on record where white citizens offered to help in the support of negro schools, provided native teachers were employed. It must not be understood, however, that opposition entirely ceased at this time. Often hostility resulted from a dislike of Northern teachers and the belief that their social and political teaching was harmful.

Because of military protection and of financial limitations,

²⁶ Report of J. W. Alvord, July 1, 1867, p. 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 67.

the educational work of the bureau was at first largely confined to cities and towns. In Charleston, since 1856, there had been maintained a system of free schools, supported partly by state aid.²⁹ As has been seen, these public school buildings were occupied by Redpath and his assistants in the spring of 1865, and opened to children of both races. All of the buildings except one were restored to the whites by 1871, and in addition the bureau built in 1868 a two-story building, known as Avery Institute. This was for the use of colored pupils and was superintended by the Rev. F. L. Cardozo, a Charleston free negro who had received a university education in Glasgow.³⁰ Other schools opened in Charleston under the direction of the bureau were the Shaw School, established by friends of Col. Robert Gould Shaw; Wallingford Academy, supported by the Northern Presbyterians; Franklin Street High School, supported by the Protestant Episcopal Home Mission; and the Baker Theological Seminary of the Methodist Episcopal Church.³¹ In Columbia, a school named for General Howard, was established and supported by the New York branch of the Freedmen's Union Commission. By January 1, 1869, it was reported that educational facilities had been provided in the cities and most of the large towns. Special mention was made of the schools at Lawrenceville, Cheraw, Bennettsville, Marion, Kingstree, Florence, Orangeburg, and St. Helena Island.³²

From 1869 on, it was the policy of the bureau to pay less attention to city schools and to use every effort to aid the country districts.³³ This change of plan coincided with the curtailment of employees and funds in the closing up of most of the departments of the bureau. But even with diminished forces, the concentration upon educational work made it possible in 1869 nearly

²⁹ Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1871, p. 344. This "experiment," as it was called, was confined to the district of Charleston.

³⁰ *Charleston Advocate*, March 2 and May 16, 1868; *The Nation*, Nov. 27, 1865; Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1871, p. 344.

³¹ Report of J. W. Alvord, Jan. 1, 1870, pp. 23-24; U. S. Bureau of Education, Chapter from the Com. of Ed., 1902, Ch. V, p. 287.

³² Report of J. W. Alvord, July 1, 1868, pp. 22-24.

³³ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1869, p. 60.

to double the number of schools, teachers and pupils.³⁴ Arrangements were made whereby a portion of the current expenses of all schools of at least thirty pupils each was met by the bureau, and aid "to the full extent of the means in hand" was given to the construction of school houses in destitute regions.³⁵ Teachers from the rural schools were largely supplied from members of the negro race who had been trained in freedmen's schools. From the first, it had been the aim of the bureau to prepare negroes to teach. It was thought that this plan would render negro schools less obnoxious to the whites and more self-sustaining, and that it would be an incentive to the progress of the race.³⁶ Normal classes were taught in Avery Institute and in the Shaw School in Charleston, and in 1869 the Methodist Episcopal Church established at Orangeburg Claflin University, with a normal department.³⁷

The subjects taught in negro schools were necessarily purely elementary at first. Most Northerners advocated the same kind of education for the negro that their own schools afforded, on the ground of equal mental capacity of the races. Their enthusiasm for higher education for the negro was temporarily restrained by the freedmen's lack of preparation, but within six years after the war, some of the schools for colored students were offering Greek, Latin, trigonometry and moral philosophy.

The great need of the freedmen for industrial education was seen by Supt. Alvord, who in his report of July 1, 1869, recommended the establishment in negro schools of a department of industrial science and art. "We earnestly propose," he wrote, "that the colored race possess comfortable homes, land and means to improve it; be skilled to labor; be a producing class—; able to cope with all other men in any department of human achievement. Why, if thus trained, should not many of them be foremost at length in the great interest of agriculture, manufactures and commerce?—Such standpoints would be vantage ground

³⁴ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1870, p. 23.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, July 1, 1869, p. 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1866, pp. 12-13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1870, pp. 23 and 64.

from which to conquer prejudice and secure hearty accord to equality of condition and capacity."³⁸ It is greatly to be deplored that his wise suggestion was not carried out.

The available statistics give a very inadequate idea of the educational work in progress during the years covered; for they do not include the numbers of schools scattered throughout the state which were not regularly reported. For instance, in January, 1867, the number of schools reported was 69 and the number of pupils 7,912. In the same report, Supt. Tomlinson gave the number of day and night schools not reported as 40 and estimated the number of pupils attending such schools as 4,000. In addition, the Sunday schools among the freedmen gave elementary instruction and so reached many who could not attend the week-day sessions. From all these facts, Tomlinson estimated that 30,000 colored persons in South Carolina had learned to read during the year 1866.³⁹ The American Freedmen's Union Commission gives the following report of the schools which its societies sustained in South Carolina during the season 1866-1867: New England Branch, 50; New York Branch, 36; Portland Auxiliary, 3; Pennsylvania Branch, 14; total, 103. By referring to the bureau's report for the same period, it will be seen that the latter's numbers are much smaller, though it had general supervision over all the freedmen's schools in the state. The bureau was never noted for its good bookkeeping, and too much importance must not be given to its statistics.

The co-operation between the bureau and the benevolent societies was so well managed that it is impossible to separate the work of the two agencies. As General Howard stated in the circular before quoted, the bureau's purpose was to "systematize and facilitate" the work of different philanthropic organizations. It advised with these societies, investigated and reported where work was most needed, compiled statistics, instituted a system of school reports and examinations of teachers, helped financially in the transportation of teachers, erection and repair of school

³⁸ *Ibid.*, July 1, 1869, p. 84.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1867, pp. 10-12.

buildings, and the maintenance of schools, and kept the progress and needs of the schools ever before the eyes of the people. A good report of the work of the different Northern societies is given in Superintendent Alvord's reports of July 1, 1868, pp. 67-74 and January 1, 1869, pp. 54-58. In passing, it is of interest to note that from 1862 to July, 1869, friends in England contributed more than half a million dollars for negro education. Of this amount, South Carolina's share was the entire support of a school of 27 pupils at Greenville and one of 18 pupils at St. Helena's Island.⁴⁰ In spite of all that was done by the different eleemosynary agencies, only a small part of the freedmen was reached. In January, 1868, one colored child of school age in six in South Carolina was in school.⁴¹ The masses were still ignorant, and would remain so until a good public school system could be established.

In 1868, the constitutional convention of South Carolina provided for a public school system and enjoined upon the legislature of the state the duty of passing a law for compulsory education. It also stipulated that schools and colleges supported by public funds should be open to all children of the state without regard to race or color.⁴² In the same year, the state legislature passed a law for the organization of an educational department. For several years the state system of public schools was a very defective one. At first no appropriation was made. Later the treasury failed to disburse the funds, when appropriated.⁴³ But the educational work of the freedmen's bureau had at least led up to the establishment of a public school system in South Carolina and soon after that was accomplished, its existence ceased. The last educational report for the state was dated July 1, 1870.

The educational work of the freedmen's bureau was undertaken amid great difficulties. One of the hindrances was obviously the hostility of the native whites. Another, almost as

⁴⁰ Report of J. W. Alvord, July 1, 1869, p. 81.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1868, p. 47.

⁴² Reynolds, John S., *Reconstruction in S. C.*, 82-83.

⁴³ *Annual Reports of the Commissioners of Education, 1870-1872.*

great, was the idea of the North that the negro was the white man's equal in mental ability and that the same kind of education was desirable for both races. The negro, with his enthusiasm for learning, was the victim of the mistakes of both sections. It has taken nearly fifty years of experience to convince both North and South of their blunders and to arrive at the improved though still imperfect system of negro education of today. There is much for which the educational department of the freedmen's bureau can be criticised, for like all pioneer organizations, it made many mistakes. But if it led, even by circuitous routes, to a better system, and on the way gave a broader life to thousands, its work was not in vain.

CHAPTER VII

FREE TRANSPORTATION, BANKS, AND CLAIMS FOR MILITARY SERVICE

Free Transportation.—Just after the war, there was great restlessness among the negroes, and in South Carolina alone thousands of them were wandering about the state. The following are the principal causes of this migratory impulse: desire to test their freedom; to receive their share of the land which they heard was being distributed at the coast; to return to their former homes from which they had been separated by military service, or by flight with their masters to the upper part of the state; to find lost relatives; to be near the protection of the army and the freedmen's bureau; to be near freedmen's schools, and to see the world.¹

Charleston and the lowlands were the Mecca of most of these wanderers. Thousands of negroes, whom their masters had taken into the interior for safe keeping upon the arrival of the Union army, were now seeking to return to their homes. An even stronger reason for the southward migration was the feeling prevalent among the negroes that real freedom could be found only in Charleston and its vicinity and that the government's bounty was to be disbursed there. Consequently, that city was overrun with unemployed negroes, dependent upon government support, while outside the town agriculture was being suspended for lack of laborers.²

Under these conditions, the freedmen's bureau endeavored to relieve the government of the burden of caring for the unemployed and to facilitate the return to industrial activity by transporting the laborers to places where their services were in demand.³ For this purpose the bureau was allowed the use of

¹ Messages and Documents, 1867-1868, p. 474; Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1866, p. 6.

² *The Nation*, II., 492; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 247. Andrews, Sidney. *The South Since the War*, pp. 24, 25, 98.

³ *Ibid.*, *The Nation*, Dec. 5, 1865, p. 813.

government transports and military railroads, and where this was not possible, the actual cost of transportation was furnished.⁴ The *Nation*, December 5, 1865, gives the authority of an officer of the bureau in Columbia for the following: "During November the bureau sent down about 250 persons each week, and they give transportation to those only who are too old or too young to make the journey on foot. Through the summer and early autumn transportation was given to none; but it is estimated that in each month more than a thousand negroes passed through Columbia on their way to the low country, most of them being negroes whom their masters had removed to the interior for safe keeping." In November, 1866, Scott reported that 1,829 freedmen had received transportation in South Carolina during the previous year.⁵

The freedmen's bureau co-operated with Northern societies to aid numbers of negroes to leave the state. Employment bureaus were established in several Northern cities and freedmen were transported to homes in the North where they could find employment.⁶ They were also assisted in settling upon the public lands in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Florida, opened to them by the Homestead Act of June 21, 1866. In the winter of 1866-1867, it is estimated that thousands of negroes, discontented because of inability to become landowners in South Carolina or to make satisfactory contracts, emigrated to Florida. The government furnished transportation and promised six months rations after arrival. Some went on contracts which secured to them good rations, \$12 per month to first class men and \$6 to women.⁷ About the same time the American Coloniza-

⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec., 1865, p. 43.

⁵ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. I, No. 6, p. 115.

⁶ Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1866, p. 6. *Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1867, p. 52. The *Nation*, III., 383. Report of Sec. of War, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 706.

⁷ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. I., No. 6, p. 123; The *Nation*, III., 23, 203, 263, and IV., 43, 143; this offer was open both to "loyal whites" and freedmen. See Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1866, p. 59.

tion Society sent a shipload of 600 negroes from Charleston to Liberia.⁸

Free transportation was given by the bureau to the following classes of whites: destitute refugees, dependent upon the government for support, officers and agents of the bureau, and teachers accredited by the commissioners or by his assistants. This led to abuse in some cases. General Scott reported in 1866 that he had found it necessary to disapprove of a large number of orders given to white citizens at Summerville who were about to make use of free transportation to attend to private business.⁹ By order of General Howard, April, 10, 1866, transportation was denied to the able-bodied except in extreme cases, and to teachers and agents except when traveling in the discharge of their duties, and duly accredited by the assistant commissioner.¹⁰

Banks.—On March 3, 1865, President Lincoln signed a bill to incorporate the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company. The object of this institution was nominally to encourage thrift among the freedmen by providing for them a bank in which, sanctioned as it was by the United States government, they could have implicit confidence. Uncalled for deposits were to be used to promote negro education.¹¹ By Saxton's order, the South Carolina Savings Bank, which had been established by him at Beaufort,¹² was merged with the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company, December 14, 1865; the balance of \$170,000 in the former institution becoming a large part of the capital of the new bank.¹³ South Carolina branches of the Freedman's Savings

⁸ American Colonization Society, 23-26; *The Nation*, III., 511 and IV. 227; *Charleston Advocate*, March 2, 1867.

⁹ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. I., No. 6, p. 115.

¹⁰ School supplies and commissary stores were also transported at government expense. See Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1866, p. 6; Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 21.

¹¹ Acts and Resolutions, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 99; Fleming, W. L., *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I., 382-383.

¹² See Chapter I., pp. 15-16.

¹³ *The Nation*, I., 779; Williams, Geo. W., *Negro Race in America*, 403-410.

and Trust Company were established at Beaufort and Charleston.¹⁴

The negroes showed their appreciation of the new institution by entrusting large sums to its keeping, considering their financial condition. During the month of January, 1866, \$424.15 were deposited in the Charleston branch and \$498.20 at Beaufort. In November, 1866, Scott reported that nearly \$100,000 had been deposited within the previous year.¹⁵ Interest of five per cent on deposits of at least \$25.00 was paid, and it is recorded that in 1868 \$4032.57 in interest, went to South Carolina depositors.¹⁶

In 1874, the bank collapsed, owing to mismanagement and fraud among its officials. At the time of its failure there were deposited at Charleston \$255,345 and at Beaufort \$65,592,¹⁷ representing the slow savings and real sacrifice of thousands of negroes. The blame for this disgraceful betrayal of trust has fallen upon the freedmen's bureau, although it does not rightfully belong there. The freedmen's bureau and the freedman's bank were two separate agencies, the only connection between them being that J. W. Alvord, one of the trustees and apparently the founder and chief manager of the bank, was also inspector of schools and finances under the bureau, and reported concerning the bank to General Howard.¹⁸ The responsibility really rests upon a small coterie of trustees, various dishonest officials, and the congress of the United States for loose incorporation and lack of proper inspection.

Claims for Military Service.—The ignorance and credulity of the negroes made them the easy prey of unscrupulous white men in the matter of money due for military services. Congress decreed during the war that no discrimination should be made between the races in the matter of payment. Every volunteer who was honorably discharged was allowed from \$25 to \$100 as

¹⁴ Report of J. W. Alvord, Jan. 1, 1866, p. 16.

¹⁵ Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. I., No. 6, p. 125.

¹⁶ Report of J. W. Alvord, Jan. 1, 1869, p. 58.

¹⁷ House Misc. Docs., 43 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 16, p. 61; Fleming, W. L., *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I., 385.

¹⁸ Report of J. W. Alvord, Jan. 1, 1866, pp. 16-17.

"bounty" in addition to his regular pay, the amount being determined by the length of time for which he had volunteered. Should the soldier die in service, this bounty should go to his family.¹⁹ Other sources of money due negro soldiers or sailors came from the capture of the enemy's vessels (prize money) and from sums sent from other states to procure enlisted men.²⁰

The negroes were defrauded in various ways. Enlisting and disbursing agents took advantage of their ignorance by keeping back money which was due. If payment was made, it frequently happened that officers easily persuaded the soldier to entrust it to them as a loan. Such loans often remained unsettled, especially in case of the death of the soldier. Probably the greatest amount of fraud was committed by so-called lawyers and false claim agents, to whom the negroes gave their claims. By representing that it would take years to untie the red tape at Washington, they either bought the claims for a small amount or advanced money on which they charged interest at the rate of 50, 100, or 150 per cent. When collections were actually made, these agents often demanded exorbitant fees and in some cases retained the entire amount.²¹

To protect the colored soldiers from such outrages, the freedmen's bureau organized its claim division in March, 1866. Officers and agents of the bureau were directed to receive claims from colored soldiers or their families and to forward them free of charge to Washington. March 29, 1867, Congress put the entire matter of the collection and payment of bounties and other money due colored soldiers into the hands of the bureau. Checks issued by the treasury department in settlement of claims of negro soldiers were made payable to the commissioner, who was instructed to "pay the agent or attorney his legal fees, and pay the

¹⁹ U. S. Statutes at Large, XIII., 488, XII., 269, 270, 598.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, XII., 606; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 260.

²¹ Ex. Docs., 41 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 6, No. 142, p. 12; Report of the Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 673; Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 260; *The Nation*, I., 779 (November 27, 1865); Report of Gen. Howard, Nov. 1, 1866, p. 5.

balance to the claimant on satisfactory identification."²² Howard reported in 1871 that 6,236 claims had been settled without cost to the claimant (except the necessary notarial fee which was restricted by law) and he estimated that \$62,360 in legal fees had been saved to the freedmen.²³ It is impossible to tell how much of this work was done in South Carolina, as the reports of the claim division were not made by states.

²² U. S. Statutes at Large, XV., 26, 27.

²³ Report of Gen. Howard, Oct. 20, 1871, p. 4.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The part played by the freedmen's bureau in the readjustment of Southern life during the years immediately following the war is a matter of controversy. There is no doubt that in South Carolina many planters were prepared to deal justly by their former slaves, who looked to them as their natural protectors. For them the freedmen's bureau was probably unnecessary. But the evidence of Northern men traveling in the South during the period under consideration would indicate that many Southerners were not so kindly disposed.

In the fall of 1865, Carl Schurz and General Grant made official investigations of conditions in the Southern states. The former reported in December of that year that in some localities "planters endeavored and partially succeeded in maintaining between themselves and the negroes the relation of master and slave, partly by concealing from them the great changes that had taken place, and partly by terrorizing them into submission to their behests. I found a very few instances of original secessionists also manifesting a willingness to give the free-labor experiment a fair trial."¹ At the same time, Grant expressed the opinion that "in some form the freedmen's bureau is an absolute necessity until civil law is established and enforced, securing to the freedmen their rights and full protection."² In December, 1865, after 14 weeks in the South, Sidney Andrews wrote that he considered it necessary for the nation to sustain in the South "some agency that shall stand between the whites and the blacks and aid each class in coming to a proper understanding of its privileges and responsibilities."³ From such evidence as is given in these three opinions it seems certain that the bureau was needed.

Among Southerners, also, were reported some advocates of

¹ Schurz, Carl, Report, Dec. 19, 1865, pp. 15, 20.

² *Ibid.*, Appended letter from Gen. Grant, p. 107.

³ Andrews, Sidney, *The South Since the War*, 400.

the bureau. When Generals Steedmen and Fullerton, upon the order of President Johnson, inspected the operation of the bureau in the Southern States, Scott, who was then the assistant commissioner for South Carolina, wrote: "The planters came forward and upheld my policy throughout, and are panic stricken at the very idea of the removal of the bureau. . . . Nearly all of the planters in the state will acknowledge that the bureau is necessary for the welfare of all classes; but such men as Spratt, Conner, and Bonham, who are not planters but politicians, give their evidence that the bureau is detrimental to the interests of the South merely from political prejudice, and not from any knowledge that they have of the working of the bureau."⁴

The "panic" of the planters at the thought of the removal of the bureau has left no expressions except in the words of Scott. On the other hand, the unanimous verdict of Southern people, both as expressed today and as found in contemporary writings, is shown in the following typical extracts: "The bureau, by the law of its creation was to expire within one year of the close of the war. We trust it will be allowed to pass away. Its presence is anomalous and unnecessary. Its tendency has been, in a great measure, to disorganization and not to repose." (*Charleston Courier*, Dec. 27, 1865.) "This state is still to be afflicted with the remains of the United States Freedmen's Bureau." (*Horry Sentinel*, as quoted in *Charleston Advocate*, December 12, 1868.) "To the great mass of white people of the South the bureau is odious." (*Nation*, April 11, 1866.) "I will venture to say, and in proof of the assertion I appeal to the letter of Gen. Sickles to Senator Trumbull, to the recent report of Gen. Scott, the Commissioner of the freedmen's bureau for this state, and to the experience of all, black and white, engaged in agriculture, that if the races were left to themselves under the control which the present military government exerts or the impartial administration of the laws which a restored state government would enforce,

⁴ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 120, p. 48; *The Nation*, II., 690 (June 1, 1866).

there would be no insuperable difficulty in the way of a complete understanding." (William Henry Trescot.)⁵

The unpopularity of the bureau in the South was of natural origin. Employers who were prepared to deal kindly and justly with their servants were for the most part trusted by the freedmen and the intervention of a third party brought unnecessary complications. For persons inclined to deceive or to intimidate the negroes, the bureau meant interference and restraint. The fact that it was established by their opponents in Congress and operated by Union soldiers and negroes, was sufficient of itself to make it obnoxious to the South.⁶

Aside from the natural dislike of compulsory supervision, the South found in some of the operations of the bureau occasion for legitimate complaint. The chief grievance was expressed in the following extracts from a local newspaper: "Just so long as a freedmen's bureau will serve out rations and clothes to a lusty and ablebodied race of negroes, just so long will they reject work. . . . Let the people of the North try this beautiful experiment in their own cities on the immigrant white population."⁷ And again: "A few more years of the freedmen's bureau in the South will scarcely leave white or black sufficient rations for daily porridge, unless provided from the National pap box. By the end of that time no white man will be capable of work and no negro willing."⁸

The responsibility for the state of things so justly censured by the *Daily South Carolinian* lies back of the bestowal of government rations to that which necessitated it—the accumulation of negroes at Charleston and the sea islands, in the expectation of becoming land owners. The blame lies primarily with Sherman for his ill-advised field order and with the provisions of the first freedmen's bureau bill, which led the negroes to expect land

⁵ Trescot, Wm. H. Letter on Reconstruction in S. C., 1867, in *American Historical Review*, XV., 578 (April, 1910).

⁶ "The Sand-hillers who applied to the U. S. Commissary at Columbia for food to save them from starvation addressed him respectfully as 'the enemy.'" *The Nation*, V., 133 (Aug. 15, 1867).

⁷ *The Daily South Carolinian*, January 30, 1866.

⁸ *Ibid.*, February 16, 1866.

from the government. Encouraged by Saxton to emigrate to the coast⁹ and led there by their desire for property, the freedmen naturally looked for support to the government, at whose invitation they had come.

Saxton's issue of provisions to those actually in danger of starvation was a necessary duty, but it in turn led to a worse evil. The belief of the negroes in gifts of land was so strong that in the winter of 1865-1866 they refused, as a rule, to contract for labor, and their determination was no doubt strengthened by the feeling that the government would keep them from actual suffering. It was not until Saxton had assured them that their expectation was groundless that they reluctantly entered into contracts with the planters.¹⁰ Thus a large share of the idleness and dependence of the negroes during their first year of freedom was caused, not as is generally believed, by a careless bestowal of free rations, but by the badly conceived policy of settling negroes upon the abandoned plantations. The continuation of government rations after the first year was necessitated by poor crops, and was a benefit to both races.

Another charge against the freedmen's bureau was voiced in Congress by Senator Davis of Kentucky when he moved to call the act of 1866 a bill "to promote strife and conflict between the white and black races."¹¹ The mere fact that the government thought it necessary to furnish an intermediary agency aroused in the freedmen suspicions of their former masters. On the other hand, it relieved the whites of the responsibility of protecting and caring for the negroes, which otherwise most of them would have felt.

Generally speaking, there was an utter lack of understanding between the native Southerners and the officials of the bureau. "The late master knows less of the negroes' character than any other person,"¹² said Saxton, in absolute confidence that his five years' experience had brought keener insight than the lifetime of

⁹ Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 221.

¹⁰ Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 95.

¹¹ Congressional Globe, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Part I., p. 421.

¹² Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 219.

a former slaveholder. Such misconceptions on the part of conscientious men, as Saxton undoubtedly was, caused needless friction; when united with dishonesty (as was the case only too often on both sides) it produced an hostility between the races, the effects of which can still be seen.

The relation of the freedmen's bureau to politics was most derogatory to the bureau and did much to create antagonism of the races. The bureau was essentially a partisan organization, brought into existence and maintained by a Republican vote in Congress. Many of its officers advocated negro suffrage,¹³ and when that policy was adopted, officers and agents of the bureau were directed to spread the good news among the freedmen and to "advise and encourage registration." They also undertook to protect their wards from "designing persons" who would prevent them from registering.¹⁴ In addition to thus protecting the negroes in the exercise of suffrage, some officials of the bureau endeavored to influence their vote. Through the work of the Union League, the negro vote became solidly Republican, and the freedmen were taught to distrust the political advice of the native whites.¹⁵

Several officials of the freedmen's bureau in South Carolina were elected by negroes to political offices. Assistant commissioner Scott resigned from the bureau to become governor of the state in 1868 and was re-elected in 1870. While governor, a resolution of impeachment was brought against him, to escape which he is accused of using \$48,645 of state funds as bribes to members of the House.¹⁶ Other state officials who had previously been connected with the bureau were Reuben Tomlinson, Justus K. Jillson, Mansfield French, B. F. Whittemore and B. F. Randolph. Compared with the large number of bureau officers and agents, the above list (which is probably incomplete) is short,

¹³ *Ibid.*, Part II., pp. 222, 249.

¹⁴ Report of Sec. of War, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 673.

¹⁵ Hendricks, Thomas A., *North American Review*, Vol. 123, pp. 268, 340; Herbert, Hilary A., *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 87, p. 151; *The Solid South*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Reynolds, *Reconstruction in South Carolina*, pp. 172-173.

but any such connection did much to deepen the impression of native South Carolinians that the bureau was contrived by Congress for purely political ends.

After a period of over forty years, thoughtful men of the South must realize that in spite of its defects the freedmen's bureau produced some favorable results. One of its greatest benefits is expressed in the following quotation from Carl Schurz's report of December, 1865: "Not half of the labor that has been done in the South this year, or will be done there next year, would have been done or would be done, but for the exertions of the freedmen's bureau."¹⁷ Undoubtedly, its supervision of contracts and transportation of the negro to fields of employment facilitated the South's return to industrial activity.

The bureau was also beneficial in protecting the negroes from unscrupulous whites. A spirit of lawlessness, resulting in abuse and murder, was rife among a certain class of South Carolinians. In December, 1865, the *Charleston Daily Courier* called upon the bureau to put down these "insurrections" and to secure the "peace and quiet of the community."¹⁸ Soon after the murder of three prominent negroes in the fall of 1868, the Democratic state committee, headed by Wade Hampton, issued an appeal to the people of South Carolina "to support the law, to preserve the peace, and to denounce those crimes which have so recently been committed in some portions of our state."¹⁹ It is true that in the bureau courts, fraud was committed by dishonest officials, but it is an open question whether, even if the opportunity had been given it by congress, the better element of South Carolina was then strong enough to have maintained justice and order as effectually as did the freedmen's bureau.

The bureau's distribution of food and clothing and its provisions for medical assistance helped large numbers of the needy of both races. By this means much actual suffering and probably

¹⁷ Schurz, Carl, Report of, 40.

¹⁸ The *Charleston Daily Courier*, Dec. 13, 1865.

¹⁹ The *Columbia Phoenix* of Oct. 23, 1868, as quoted in Affairs in the late Insurrectionary States, 42 Cong., 2 Sess., Report on South Carolina, Vol. 2, pp. 1248, 1249.

many deaths were averted. The educational work of the bureau is still felt in the existence of schools founded by its help, and in the state public school system, which may be said in some sense to be the outgrowth of this department. Indirectly, the educational work of the freedmen's bureau stimulated the whites to a wider interest in the public schools.

At the close of forty-five years since its dissolution, it seems possible to make a reasonably fair judgment of the bureau as a whole. Like all other human institutions, it was neither wholly good nor wholly evil. To have succeeded as its founder hoped it would succeed, would have required infinite wisdom and perfect honesty on the part of its officials. Its worst failures are attributable to the inferiority of the minor officers and agents upon whom the real work of the bureau lay, as well as to an incomplete knowledge of the difficulties inherent in the conditions themselves.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Form of Contracts between planters and freedmen, as substantially adopted by the Darlington meeting, revised and adopted by the mass meeting of Sumter, Kershaw and Clarendon planters, December 21, 1865, and approved by Major General Saxton, of the Freedmen's Bureau:

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
.....District.

Articles of agreement between.....and....., freed men and women, whose names are hereunto attached:

First—The said freedmen agree to hire their time as laborers, on the plantation of....., from the 1st of January, 1866, to the 1st of January, 1867; to conduct themselves faithfully, honestly, civilly and diligently; to perform all labor on said plantation or such as may be connected therewith, that may be required by the said....., or his agent, and to keep no poultry, dogs or stock of any kind, except as hereinafter specified; no firearms or deadly weapons, no ardent spirits, nor introduce or invite visitors, nor leave the premises during working hours without the written consent of the proprietor or his agent.

Second—The said freedmen agree to perform the daily tasks hitherto usually allotted on said plantation, to-wit: 125 to 150 rails; cutting grain, three to six acres; ditching and banking, 300 to 600 feet; hoeing cotton, 70 to 300 rows an acre long; corn, 4,000 to 7,000 hills. In all cases where tasks cannot be assigned they agree to labor diligently ten hours a day.

Third—For every day's labor lost by absence, refusal or neglect to perform the daily task or labor, said servants shall forfeit fifty cents. If absent voluntarily or without leave, two dollars a day; if absent more than one day without leave, to be subject to dismissal from the plantation and forfeiture of share in the

crop. All such fines and forfeitures shall inure to the benefit of the employer and employees in proportion to their relative shares.

Fourth—Said freedmen agree to take care of all utensils, tools and implements committed to their charge, and to pay for the same if injured or destroyed; also, to be kind and gentle to all work animals under their charge, and to pay for any injury which they may sustain while in their hands through their carelessness or neglect; and forfeitures herein specified will be subject to the decision of the authorities having proper jurisdiction of the same.

Fifth—They stipulate to keep their houses, lots and persons in neat condition, subject to the inspection of the employer or his agent at any time.

Sixth—They agree to furnish from their number a nurse for the sick, also stock-minder and foreman, to be selected by the employer. They agree to be directed in their labor by the foreman, to obey his orders, and that he shall report all absences, neglects, refusal to work, or disorderly conduct, to the employer or his agent.

Seventh—Said employer agrees to treat his employees with justice and kindness; to furnish each family with quarters on his plantation, with a quarter of an acre of land for a garden and the privilege of getting fire-wood from some portion of the premises, to be indicated by the employer, (and to divide the crop with them in the following proportions, viz: to the employees one-third of the corn, potatoes and peas, gathered and prepared for market, and one-third net proceeds of the ginned cotton, or its market value at the end of the year.) When desired, to furnish the usual bread and meat ration, to be accounted for at the market price, out of their share of the crop. (Where "stated wages" are allowed, the *pro rata* of the crop will be omitted.)

Eighth—Said employer agrees to furnish animals, and to feed them: also wagons, carts, plantation implements, such as cannot be made by the laborer on the plantation.

Ninth—All violations of the terms of this contract, or of the rules and regulations of the employer, may be punished by dismissal from the plantation, with forfeiture of his or her share of the crop or wages, as the case may be. But the employer shall pay said parties at the rate of four dollars a month for full hands, deducting therefrom advances made.

Tenth—The employer or his agent shall keep a book, in which shall be entered all advances made by him, and fines and forfeitures for lost time, or any cause, which book shall be received as evidence in same manner as merchants' books are now received in courts of justice, and shall have a right to deduct from the share of each laborer all his or her fines and forfeitures, also all advances made by him, subject to the decision of the authorities having jurisdiction of the same.

Eleventh—The laborer shall not sell any agricultural product to any person whatever, without the written consent of the employer, until after the division of the crops.

Twelfth—The laborers shall commence work at sunrise, and be allowed from one to three hours each day for their meals, according to the season of the year.¹

Witness our hands, etc., this.....

¹ Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Part II., pp. 241-242.

APPENDIX B

AN INCOMPLETE ROLL OF OFFICERS AND AGENTS OF THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU IN SOUTH CAROLINA, WITH THE OFFICES HELD AND THE AUTHOR'S SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON EACH

- Bassett, Capt. Geo. T., Chief Commissary, Member of Gen. Saxton's staff. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98.)
- Baker, E. C., Office not given. (Letter in possession of the writer.)
- Caraher, Lieut. Col. A. G., Acting Asst. Com. of Laurens District, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 124.)
- Chase, Lieut. Jno. C., Sub. Asst. Com. of Georgetown District, Nov. 1, 1866. (*Ibid.*, p. 119.)
- Cornelius, Maj. J. E., Acting Asst. Com. of Edisto District, Nov. 1, 1866. (*Ibid.*, p. 123. *Charleston Daily Courier*, March 10, 1866.)
- Deane, Brevet Maj. E. L., Aide-de-camp—Member of Gen. Scott's staff, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 126.)
- De Forrest, Brevet Maj. J. W., Acting Asst. Com. of Greenville District, Nov. 1, 1866. (*Ibid.*, p. 122.)
- Delany, Major, Officer (Colored.) *Daily South Carolinian*. Jan. 17, 1866.
- De Witt, Surgeon Wm. R., Chief Medical Officer for S. C. and Ga., Mar. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 115. *The Nation*, II., 260.)
- Edie, Col. J. R., Asst. Com. for S. C., July 31, 1868-Jan. 1, 1869. (Report of Gen. Howard, Oct. 14, 1868, pp. 3, 26.)
- Edwards, Maj. J. E., Sub. Asst. Com. of the Islands. (*New York Times*, June 13, 1866.)
- Ely, Brevet Brig. Gen., Sub. Asst. Com. at Columbia, 1865, 1866. (*Ibid.*, *The Nation*, I., 290.)

- Evans, M. A., Agent—Dismissed Dec. 4, 1865—(Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 117.)
- Everson, Brevet Maj. E. W., Asst. Surgeon and Aide-de-camp—Member of Gen. Scott's staff, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 126.)
- Faust, Brevet Brig. Gen. B. F., Acting Inspector General—Member of Gen. Scott's staff, Nov. 1, 1866. (*Ibid.*, p. 125.)
- Fowler, Chaplain J. H., In charge of Dept. of Marriage Relations for S. C. and Ga., Nov. 3, 1865. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 117.)
- French, Rev. Mansfield, Supervisor of Missions and Marriage Relations of Freedmen, Feb. 7, 1866. (Charleston *Weekly Record*, Feb. 17, 1866. New York *Times*, June 13, 1866.)
- Gile, Brevet Brig. Gen. Geo. W., Acting Asst. Com. of Sumter, Darlington, Chesterfield, Marlborough and Marion Districts, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 119.)
- Greene, Col. J. Duwell, Acting Asst. Com. of Columbia District, Nov. 1, 1866. (*Ibid.*, p. 120.)
- Happersett, J. C. G., Surgeon-in-chief—Member of Gen. Scott's staff, Nov. 1, 1866. (*Ibid.*, p. 126.)
- Harkisheimer, Brevet Maj. W. J., Officer in charge of Richland and Lexington State Districts. (Report of Gen. Howard Oct. 14, 1868, p. 27.)
- Hogan, Dr. M. K., Surgeon-in-chief of S. C., 1869. (Report of Gen. Howard, Oct. 23, 1869, p. 17.)
- Howard, Brevet Brig. Gen. C. H.,—Brother of O. O. Howard—Inspector General—Chief of Gen. Saxton's staff—Jan. 20, 1866. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98. *South Carolina Leader*, Dec. 9, 1865.)
- Jillson, J. K.,—A Mass. teacher—Employee of the Educational Department. (Reynolds, *Reconstruction in South Carolina*, 87.)
- Ketchum, Capt. Alex. P., Acting Asst. Adjutant General in charge of the restoration of lands, Oct. 19, 1865. (Ex. Docs., 39

Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 8. *Daily South Carolinian*, Jan. 17, 1866.)

Kinsman, Brevet Maj. O. D., Asst. Adjutant General—Member of Gen. Saxton's staff. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98.)

Lewis, Capt. J. W. (Private Letter.)

Lockwood, W. H. (Private Letter.)

Long, Capt. J. H., Aide-de-camp—Member of Gen. Scott's staff—Jan. 20, 1866. (*Charleston Weekly Record*, Feb. 10, 1866.)

Lott, Lieut. L. J., Sub. Asst. Com. at Charleston. (*New York Times*, June 13, 1866.)

Low, Brevet Lieut. Col. James P., Chief Receiving and Disbursing Officer for S. C., 1866—Member of Gen. Saxton's and Gen. Scott's staffs. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, pp. 125, 126.)

McConaghy,—From Chicago—Officer at Winnsboro. (Private Letter.)

Middleton, J. B., Special Agent in Marion District, 1867. (Private Letter.)

Neagle, Controller General. (Private Letter.)

Newcomb., Geo. (Private Letter.)

Pillsbury, Agent. (*Daily Record*, Freedmen's Aid Society. Letter from R. Tomlinson, Mar. 26, 1869.)

Place, Capt. Samuel, Officer at Sumter. (Private Letter.)

Powers, Lieut. J. S., Sub. Asst. Com. of Beaufort District, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 119.)

Runkle, Brevet Brig. Gen. Benj. P., Acting Asst. Com. of Anderson District, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 121.)

Rutherford, Capt. J. P., Assistant Quartermaster—Member of Gen. Saxton's staff. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98.)

Saxton, Brevet Maj. Gen. Rufus, Asst. Com. for S. C., June 13, 1865-Jan. 15, 1866. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 2, 46. Report of the Joint Com. on Reconstruction, Part II., p. 216.)

- Saxton, Maj. S. Willard, Aide-de-camp—Member of Gen. Saxton's staff. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98.)
- Scott, Brevet Maj. Gen. R. K., Asst. Com. for S. C., Jan. 20, 1866-July 31, 1868. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 112. Howard's Report, Oct. 14, 1868, p. 26.)
- Smith, Brevet Maj. H. W., Asst. Adjutant General—Member of Gen. Saxton's and Gen. Scott's staffs. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98. Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 125.)
- Stoeber, Lieut E. M., Aide-de-camp—Member of Gen. Saxton's staff—Oct. 3, 1865. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98.)
- Stone, Lieut. (Major), Sub. Asst. Com. at Edgefield. Agent at Aiken, Feb. 21, 1867. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 122. *The Nation*, IV., 143.)
- Taylor, Brevet Maj. Stuart M., Asst. Adjutant General. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 116.)
- Tomlinson, Reuben—From Philadelphia, Supt. of Education for S. C. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 115.)
- Towles, D. F., Discharged Jan. 15, 1866. (Ex. Docs., 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 8, No. 70, p. 98.)
- Walker, Brevet Maj. L., Acting Asst. Com. of Anderson District—Succeeding Gen. Runkle—Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 121.)
- Whittemore, Chaplain B. F. (Private Letter.)
- Williams, Col. G. A., Acting Asst. Com. of Charleston District, Nov. 1, 1866. (Sen. Docs., 39 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 118.)

APPENDIX C

SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS OF THE NEW ENGLAND BRANCH OF THE
FREEDMEN'S UNION COMMISSION, STATE OF SOUTH
CAROLINA, 1867-1868

| TOWN | NAME OF SCHOOL | TEACHER | SALARY PER MO. | ADOPTED BY | OPENED |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Arthur Sumner | \$1,000.00 p. a | Barnard Soc. | |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Carrie S. Lincoln | 40.00 | Dorchester | Oct. 7 |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Kate Niles | 40.00 | Miss E. C. Greene | Oct. 7 |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Clara F. Woodbury | 40.00 | Members of King's Chapel | Oct. 7 |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Mary A. Upton | 40.00 | Lincoln Soc. | |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Augusta Sawyer | 35.00 | Roxbury | Oct. 7 |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Maggie Wynne | 25.00 | Hollis St. Church | Oct. 7 |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Jane Weston | 25.00 | Cambridge | Oct. 7 |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Ellen M. Jones | 40.00 | Theo. Parker Soc. | |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Mary E. Billings | | Dedham | |
| Charleston | Shaw Memorial | Rosa Ramsder | | | |
| Statesbury | | Richard S. Holloway | | | |
| Statesbury | | Mrs. R. S. Holloway | | | |
| Kingstree | | Sarah Coleman | | | |
| Camden | Jackson | Justus K. Jilson | 50.00 | Burlington, Vt. | |
| Camden | Jackson | Ellen A. Gates | 35.00 | Barnard Soc. | |
| Camden | Jackson | Louisa Dibble | 25.00 | Winchester | |
| Camden | Jackson | Frank Carter | 35.00 | Newton Soc. | |
| Camden | Jackson | F. J. Collie* | | | |
| Camden | Jackson | Marion D. Stuart | 35.00 | Appleton St. S. S. | |
| Camden | Jackson | Sarah F. Woodworth | 35.00 | Lowell | |
| Oro | | H. J. Maxwell | 35.00 | Brookline | |
| Beaufort | Hooper | Elizabeth H. Botume | 40.00 | Watertown Soc. | |
| Beaufort | Hooper | Fanny S. Longford | 40.00 | Indian St. Church | |
| Summerville | Stevenson | Mary A. Hasley | 40.00 | Cambridge | Oct. 21 |
| Summerville | Stevenson | Catherine A. Cogswell | 40.00 | Foxboro | Oct. 21 |
| Ladies' Is. | Eustis Plantation | S. R. Bowlthorpe | | Mr. F. A. Eustis | April 6 |
| Sumter | | Jane B. Smith | 40.00 | Cambridgeport | Sept. 30 |
| Lynchburg | | Thos. Jones | | | |
| Fdisto Is. | | A. Jane Knight | 40.00 | Lancaster | Nov. 13 |
| Marion | | Joshua Wilson | | | |
| Florence | Wilson | Thos. C. Cox | 45.00 | Barnard Soc. | Oct. 1 |
| Florence | Garrison | T. B. Gordon | 35.00 | Hopedale | Oct. 1 |
| Cheraw | | Henry L. Shrewsbury | 40.00 | First Ch., Boston | |
| Cheraw | | Timothy L. Weston | 35.00 | | |
| Marion | | Ino. A. Barre | 35.00 | Milford, N. H. | |
| Marion | Champion | Wm. A. Havre | 45.00 | Cambridge | |
| Springfield | | Henry F. Hayne | 45.00 | | |
| Society Hill | | James Hamilton | | | |
| Orangeburg | Tullock | T. K. Sarportas | 50.00 | St. Johnsbury | |
| Kingstree | Tomlinson | Henry Frost | 40.00 | Barnard Soc. | |
| Orangeburg | Tullock | W. J. McKinlay | 35.00 | | |
| Darlington | Washington | Mrs. Whittemore | 35.00 | Arlington St. Ch. | |
| Camden | Jackson | Marion D. Stuart | 35.00 | Apple-on St. S. S. | |
| Camden | Jackson | S. F. Woodworth | 35.00 | Lowell | |
| Darlington | Jefferson | Frances A. Kei.h | | | |

* Left

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